LIGHT FINGERS

Frank Lord

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BY

FRANK LORD

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To

TERWOOD RUN

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CHAPTER I

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

SLENDER as a deer (she *must* have been that way), a young woman fled from a smart shop on West Twenty-third Street, New York. Trailing close upon her heels, and hurrying against a column of west-bound people, came a female store detective. It was late in the afternoon of an October day, and very early in the present century.

Salesmen and saleswomen tired of selling marched west so that smoky little engines could drag them on elevated tracks through and across the old Tenderloin and up to their homes in Harlem.

Buyers tired of buying walked slowly east toward Fifth Avenue where well-fed horses could trot them to their homes in carriages or busses on the ground floor of the town.

At a corner people gorged against and eddied around the huge body of a policeman, and it was in this eddy that the she-detective stopped and arrested my mother.

The public arm of the law, dressed in blue, recognized

the private arm of the law dressed in mauve, and offered his assistance which the mauve disdainfully declined. A detective dressed like a lady needs no help in arresting one, and she jerked my mother into a doorway of a building that was being repaired and took away from her a muff and a piece of neck fur called a boa.

The blue-clad policeman stood for a moment with official curiosity leaning against a door jamb to give his fallen arches a moment's rest.

"What else you got?" snapped the detective.

"You better answer up, lady," spoke the policeman.

"Nothing," said my mother, "except the two pieces that you took."

"How about yesterday?"

"Yesterday? I was looking—yesterday," the girl replied.

"Some other time then?" the detective persisted. "If you have taken other things and have got them and will return them," the detective continued with a female attempt at a masculine glare, "and we take them to the boss of the store, you won't be locked up for so long—if you are locked up at all."

My mother must have just moved from a shadow into a flood of window-light, and the detective noticed for the first time the wonderful eyes of cloudy blue, the tilted nose, the flexible lips and the close snug ears, and the chestnut hair of a pretty girl of eighteen. The blue-law grunted "Good night" and climbed on to a Broadway car.

The mauve-law spoke again and said, "You come with me and see the boss. He has a room back of his office, and you will have a chance to throw yourself upon his

mercy." They had walked for nearly half a block when the detective added, "And throw yourself good and hard."

When they arrived at the shop the ground floor was deserted and dark. The detective let herself in with a key, and my mother followed. Far back in one corner a light burned at the foot of a stairway and, the detective walking ahead, they proceeded toward the light.

"And remember," the she-detective added, "if you ask for mercy, ask for it hard."

She glanced approvingly at my mother as they neared the light and ascended the stairs. "Mr. Blackmar is very good-looking," the detective continued, "and you'll think so too. He spends many more nights in his office-bedroom than he does in his residence."

They were climbing a second flight of stairs. "When this boss of mine prosecutes, he prosecutes hard. He'll put you on the 'Island' six months to a year with the molls and the pedlers and the hop-heads. Little cells and rotten food."

My mother said nothing. Probably.

"Were you ever married, dearie?" asked the lady in mauve, with pretended sympathy.

My mother answered, "Yes."

"Living?"

"Yes, but not with me. I was a governess and married a fiddler—at least that's what the lady I worked for called him. She was much older than I, and fatter. Her husband was dead, and being fond of music and having plenty of money—I was the goat. I have been stealing to get money to go to Italy and get Torello back."

The door at the head of the stairway opened sud-

denly and a man appeared, wearing an overcoat and putting on his gloves. I saw him many years later, and then he looked very heavy. But how he looked as he returned to his office followed by the detective and my mother I do not know. The detective explained to Mr. Blackmar how to call a policeman from the Thirtieth Street Station-house if he should need one and almost immediately left, closing the door as she went.

No policeman was called, no stolen property was returned. There was no prosecution. Sometimes cases are compromised. This case was compromised there and that night, and the result was me.

CHAPTER II

INTO THE FIRE

IN NOVEMBER, about Thanksgiving time, my mother was again arrested in another place, and this time a policeman took her to Jefferson Market Police Court, and upon her admission of guilt she was sent down-town for trial, where three judges in black silk gowns huddle their heads together and sentence prisoners.

"She said she done it," said a policeman.

"She waives examination," said the magistrate.

"Are you ready for trial?" lisped the judge who sat in the middle.

"She says she is, and don't want a lawyer, and her plea is guilty," answered a clerk who sat within the railing.

The men of silk conferred with one another and whispered with a number of store detectives, among whom was a detective in mauve who took her turn at the judges' ears and tripped briskly out of the court room to continue her work. Work, should I say, or profession? I don't know. As far as the meaning of words goes I am above the use of dictionaries. For spelling I still need them, and I have a good dictionary at my left hand.

The reader must bear with me for these little diversions. They will be frequent and if not to the point

they will at least be self-revealing. I shall try to be truthful, my typewriter notwithstanding. It is easier for people to lie on a telephone than face to face, and with a typewriter one must watch one's self more carefully than if he used a pen.

If, in a criminal court, a first offender has become a second offender, the fact of his first offense is called his "previous." A large number of men and women are employed by courts to look up and record and file all that they know of the person who has been arrested. These people protect the public but they sometimes slam the doors in the face of hope. In this particular case they provided facts which otherwise I would be unable to get. My mother's "previous" reads as follows:

"Anne Leaubeau Torello, now calling herself Anne Leaubeau, eighteen years of age; born in France; mother English, father French; came to this country without her parents at the age of sixteen; was employed as a governess by Mrs. ——, residing at —— Fifty-seventh Street, New York City. While so employed she was married to Giuseppe Torello, a music-hall fiddler of great talent. Torello, according to the defendant, abandoned her and went back to Italy to complete his studies on the violin. Defendant further *says* that Torello was joined abroad by the woman who had employed her and that she had been stealing to get money to go to Italy and win back the husband who had deserted her. Investigations at—— Fifty-seventh Street did show that Mrs. ——, a widow of great wealth, had leased the property for a long period of years and that her rent was being forwarded to Firenzi, Italy. It is said that Mrs. —— was passionately fond of musicians or music and had spent large sums of money in encouraging male talent. The defendant would make no admission as to other means of livelihood, and it is believed that her only source of income was the money

obtained from the sale of stolen goods. Her bank book has been seized and her bank account attached. When arrested the defendant wore a shirt-waist and a plain skirt with one short petticoat, but in her rooms were found a number of double skirts of the kind worn by shoplifters. Never arrested before but has often been under surveillance by shop detectives and city police."

Whether or not the three judges before imposing sentence had read this report upon Anne Leaubeau or whether, if read, they believed it, I do not know, but it is a matter of record that in imposing sentence the presiding judge said that my mother was a dangerous thief and, that on account of her beauty and fashionable appearance, which permitted her to go to the best shops without attracting attention, she was an unusual menace. He added benevolently that he believed in a stern administration of justice and that he and his associates felt that they were appointed judges to act as agents of Justice and not as agents of the Salvation Army. Too much well-meaning effort was spent in trying to reclaim unregenerate people. He then sentenced my mother to eleven months and twenty-nine days in the penitentiary on Blackwell's Island. Blackwell's Island lies under the Queen's Bridge. It supports several thousand prisoners, and several thousand indigent men and women who are not prisoners but have no place to go. It is now called Welfare Island. If that island is welfare, then, as Big Tim Sullivan used to say, "onions is fruit."

Had my mother been sentenced to one year she would have been allowed a reduction of time for good behavior. People sentenced for less than one year are allowed nothing for good behavior. My mother was to get her reduction of time in another way. Me.

Along in the spring the prison authorities were aware of my approach. Birth control was then, as now, a crime and besides my mother wanted to "have me." The governor of the state, however, when he heard, through alleys of gossip known as official channels, that I was about to be born, immediately pardoned my mother and ordered her immediate release, saying that as long as he was governor no child would be permitted to begin life in a prison cell.

If the pardon, when signed, had been promptly mailed, the governor's benevolent purpose would have been accomplished. But some clerk went to a ball game or a horse race or a birth or a funeral, and there was an unavoidable delay somewhere. My mother's pardon was dated July sixteenth. I was born on the twenty-first, and my mother walked out of prison with me on the first day of August. I was wrapped in a shawl given to my mother by the warden's wife as a going-away present.

To the boat, which then discharged passengers at the foot of Seventieth Street, I was carried by a colored woman called Eyes, who had been in prison for participating in a badger game. Bedrooms. Transoms. Broken doors and an irate husband. Husband doesn't want to go to court and will take his mental anguish out in cash upon the spot. Eyes was also a user of narcotic drugs. Heroin called happy-dust.

What I have written above I learned partly from my mother, partly in ways that will appear later and partly from court records. I owe to the reader, as well as myself, the duty of getting facts where facts are obtainable. From now on I shall write from memory.

I can recall incidents in early life and shall under-

take to record some impressions, but whether the impressions recorded will be the remembered impression of a child or a grown-up impression of something that once befell a child, I don't know. Memory at best is a single word applied to a wide variety of mental activities. Peter Dunn caused Mr. Dooley to say to Hennesey or Hennesey to Mr. Dooley: "So and so is getting old. He can't remember anything unless it happened yesterday or forty years ago." I am now twenty-four.

I believe that my mother was the most beautiful woman who ever lived.

Human beings are the product of environment, probably, to a greater extent than they are the product of heredity. People suffer handicaps not known to other animals. It must be borne in mind that we are possibly descendants of the meanest animals that ever lived. Lazy monkeys, hanging by their tails from trees, found delight in pelting industrious monkeys with cocoanuts and in chattering day-times about what they thought might have happened at night. Bad beginning for people But why speak of it? Do collie dogs have Darwins to prove that they were once hyenas?

A pointer pup, wherever he is born, will point and point without instruction. A setter will set, and a crow can count to four and he can not count to five. If a robin is born in a raven's nest he can join the redbreasts if he can find them and his early association with the ravens will not be taken to his disadvantage.

We had a very happy life in a five-room apartment in Great Jones Street. Great Jones Street runs from Broadway to the Bowery and stops there. Its continuation is known as East Third Street. The Bowery commences

at Eighth Street. Some of the best shops in New York were then south of Twenty-third Street and, while my mother was agile as a cat, she doubtless saw certain advantages in living near her work. She had other apartments, all of them furnished and in various parts of the town. One on Avenue C, near Twentieth Street; one on the west side of Hell's Kitchen, which she called "Hell's Kitchen, Parlor and Bath"; and later, another just off Gramercy Park. She rented various places and as we moved from one place to another we carried no baggage, not even a tooth-brush. We moved just as rich people moved. We just decided and it was done. Every place was furnished completely and comfortably. I had three tooth-brushes in every place and was taught to use them in rotation, allowing the bristles, as my mother said, to rest themselves. Every place was neat as wax. We lived in Great Jones Street most of the time. When we "moved" it was usually immediately after some one had called my mother to the telephone. Anne would say, "Yes, yes." A moment later we had moved.

It was in the place off Gramercy Park that I learned to read, and it was there, I think, that I formed my first impressions of my mother's beauty and her sweetness of character but—just now I want to read over the pages which I have pulled out of my typewriter and are now placed faced downward in the drawer of a desk.

What I shall now look over is in reality a preface, but had it been so designated would it have been read?

CHAPTER III

SOMETHING OF ANNE

I SEE little, if anything, to correct. One page I did over entirely and left a blank where I had previously written the street number of the house in West Fifty-seventh Street in which lived the middle-aged lady who stole away from my mother her Italian fiddler. Torello was a could-if-he-would. He was what Jean Maline, H. C., would have called a subjunctive artist. H. C. is "habitual criminal."

Maline had been driven out of that division of the University of Paris devoted to letters and called the Sorbonne, for writing a prize-winning essay for another student. Coming to this country he won prizes on his own account for being the model prisoner in that division of the University of Life devoted to studies in crime and variously called "quod," "stir" and "Sing Sing." But the nicest name and the one in most general use is "away."

On an earlier page, in disobedience of a grammatical rule, I said, "The result was me." Credit or debit Jean Maline. "I," said Jean, "is a skeleton of self in a collar and tie and gloves. 'Me' is really you. Meat with a shirt and pants on. Love, fight, endurance and sympathy or hate, squeal and squawk. Whatever *you* are the

French say *moi.* The English, too far behind, all feet and on the earth. Damned fools. The French, too far ahead. They climb with their feet to high roofs and they think they flew. They fly from roofs and break their necks because they have no place to put their feet. The Americans, *pardonnez moi.* You are one. I say *nil, pas,* nothing. I may be prejudiced because they lock me up."

More of Jean and what he saw and did for me. But we will wait and chronicle, as and when said and done. Wait also for that rare old burglar, Bull Donovan, turned murderer, by a quick and unwise decision. When seated in the chair for electrocution, he asked the official to turn on some more juice or turn it all off. "The way it is now," he said, "you are only tickling my feet."

The foregoing pages shall stand as written, but from now more of what happened and less of what I thought of it. Ants march and arrive. Crickets hop. I have no writer's style. Shall I throw a ball of yarn at you and then unwind it, or give you an end to hold while I typewrite it into a ball?

In Gramercy Park, and in the four bounding streets around it, my mother was the loveliest, the kindest, and, even in that fashionable quarter, by far the prettiest and, by much further, the best-dressed woman in the neighborhood.

We attended church in a poor and shabby neighborhood, not far from the East River and some city blocks to the south. I was proud of Anne—as I could call her if I wanted to—and walked close to her side, making a ring of one thumb and a finger and capturing within it one of her pretty fingers extended as soon as we got on to the sidewalk.

Most of the boys had shabby mothers, and heavy-faced, with shambling, pounding feet. These boys walked far ahead or a little behind their mothers, hoping that the interval of space would kill any suspicion of kinship.

I was always clean and well-dressed; warm on cold days, cool on hot days and dry when it rained. Other boys, and their sisters as well, were whatever the weather was. Us, the rain would separate, for each had a stolen umbrella. Other families rain gathered into a rebellious, slow-moving mass under one umbrella. The first time I heard the word "bitch," was when a boy was crowded from the umbrella. "You bitch," he said to his mother.

Anne was shocked and tapped the boy on the shoulder. "Boy, if your mother was what you called her," she asked him, "what does that make of you?" A whirlwind of abuse came to her in reply, to which the entire umbrella household contributed with filth and profanity. I punched the nearest one and was knocked down by the mother's fist. Anne complimented them all for their splendid loyalty to one another, but a wise policeman escorted us to church, another church in the interest of a quiet Sabbath.

At home, in whichever house we might be living, we were the lady of twenty-two and the young gentleman of four, "going on" the next year.

Anne hated and feared even the thought of the appearance of age. I found her one morning in her bedroom making faces in front of a mirror framed in gilt. There was such a mirror in every room of the four places where we back-and-forth lived. She was twisting her face from side to side and up and down, drawing the skin tight over her high cheek-bones and the bones of the lower jaw.

"See," she cried, abandoning her contortions and seizing one of my drawing pencils, "see what lines do." She sketched a little girl's head on a piece of linen which she used as a dresser-scarf.

"I'll make her eighteen." And with lines quickly drawn around mouth and eyes, the little girl became eighteen.

"Twenty-eight." Some lines about and under the chin and the girl was twenty-eight. My mother lined her eyes, chin and face into middle age, and then with an eraser on the hair made her eighty and ready for Heaven. With two down strokes at the mouth, she was old and villainous and not ready for Heaven. My mother laughed.

"Lines, Sammy, nothing but lines. Lead on paper, and sagging muscles on faces. Same thing. Grown people quit using their faces except to let the tongue wag. Children laugh and use their face muscles and look younger, and babies laugh and cry and squall and look youngest of all."

She kissed me. A play kiss on the rim of my ear, and she prattled more wisdom.

"Same with the muscles deep down under the skin. The big ones. You'll never see little Anne walking like this." She hobbled across the room and into the next. I looked at the picture of the little girl turned eighty and started one of my own.

Suddenly, with the table and me as center, my mother, escaped from her outer dress, was turning cart-wheels in a circle. She dropped and rolled on the floor as a pencil drops from a table, and made circles of her body, alternately bringing feet to head and head to feet. No

music-box, phonograph or radio to egg her. Her music-box was in her soul.

As I grew older, and long before I was six, she taught me to skip, hop, spring my body and bend myself forward, back and sidewise. We usually did these exercises together. She taught me to walk on my hands. We raced the length of two rooms that way and sometimes she placed small obstacles in our path so that we would have to step over or around them. It was great fun. Her own figure had the liveness of a young boy. Of brute strength she had but little. Her speed was marvelous and her entire body seemed to vibrate like the string of a fiddle. She was proud of herself physically. Her body was a temple but as to whether she ever worshiped in it or not I have no evidence. She loved in it. That is sure.

My size and my great strength are, I presume, inherited from my father. Any skill in the use of my body that I may have, I attribute to my mother's training. Sometimes she would wake me in the morning and somersault herself over the foot of the bed to a place by my side, her slippered feet near my head.

"Fat women can't do that, Sammy," she said. "They go to Turkish baths and hire rubbers, but only the rubbers get thin and strong. The fat women are dumb-bells for the exercise of other peoples' muscles. I shall always keep thin and I shall always look young and so long as I have you I shall be young." She squeezed my head between her slippers and leaning, kissed the soles of my feet. I guess that I was worth having—in those days.

The appearance of age, Anne fought with determination all of her life, for when, years later, I saw her

lying white and slim on a cot in a state's prison for women, her face was smooth and young. She did not look much older than the little girl on the stolen white linen, after the second treatment of the pencil.

"Don't she look girlish?" asked a street-walker who was in for stealing a watch in the night-time from unoccupied trousers.

In the prison, this street-walker was the first to volunteer service in contagious wards. When wardens say that a prisoner is a model prisoner, he may tell the truth, although the same prisoner, when discharged, wastes little or no time in committing a crime at least so serious as the crime for which he had been imprisoned. My own experience behind prison walls has left me in doubt on most matters concerning which prison experts seem to be rather certain. I have drawn one or two conclusions of no particular value but at the proper time, or at least a later time, I shall offer them to the reader.

CHAPTER IV

CAT, RAT AND HAT

"CRIME-STUFF," of course I read, and the magazines are using it. A pleasantly meant tip to these expert writers. Their "knowledge" of criminals is "learned" in courts or in prisons. You might as well study race-horses in stalls, or butterflies in cellars or blizzards in paintings. The why of the blizzard is to come.

Penologists, students of the Juke family, (the Jukes to come later) study animals after they are caught. "This one," they say—some thief with a record as long as your arm—"is a natural thief. See how narrow he is between the temples." They don't *know* how bunglingly he was educed into being, and they never *saw* his brother who was better delivered and whose temples were farther apart, because his father had work when he was born. Teachers and preachers, and the Salvation Army—not policemen and judges and wardens, my dear readers, go to them for cures. For information go to shop girls who stayed straight, to bootblacks who blacked boots, to janitors who don't use dope, and elevator boys who run elevators, to waiters, cab drivers and even to the steamy-faced girl behind the desk in a laundry, where one white shirt is up in the rack and waits and waits and waits,—go

around and see these people. They may not let you in, but try it. Find the man who doesn't come and why. If you would know from experts try to get truth out of expert criminals. They keep still for a living, but they know much more than the criminal experts whose living is more noisily earned.

Animals are studied wild, but penologists study criminals tame. Trapped. They are afraid of criminals wild and leave them to their jungles. A conference of prison experts should be held a little closer to the lair of the gorilla—say in Chatham Square.

Too long a hop, this, but I said I was a cricket and if you are an ant, please excuse me for hopping, and if, God bless you, you are a cricket, forgive me for getting back to my task.

As you may have guessed, my mother loved me passionately and when public-school truant officers came around to "see" why I didn't attend school, she would hug me away from them and say fiercely, with her blue eyes leaping: "I'll send this boy to school when schoolteachers know how to teach a lot of children whom they don't love the way I can teach one whom I do love."

Sometimes the truant officer would be insistent and produce an oblong piece of paper under which he claimed the right to take my body and remove it forthwith to a half- or full-time seat in a public school. On these occasions my mother would open her wallet, in which she always seemed to have a great deal of money and say:

"Joe, let me lend you ten dollars. You take it and pay it back to me the next time you come for this little boy."

That happened rather often. The same truant officer

never came back. Another officer would come and still another. My mother would call him Bill or Ike or Mr. Lollipop or whatever name came to her tongue. There was always another loan and the same officer never came twice.

As I think I have already said, every house that we lived in was always clean and comfortable. The bathtubs were shiny and smooth and I could slip up and down the bottom of the tub without encountering sandy rough spots. There were stolen towels in abundance, of all sizes and all degrees of softness and roughness. My mother taught me which ones to use as blotters and which ones to use for friction. We blotted ourselves and rubbed each other.

In the rooms near Gramercy Park we were not connected with gas and there we burned kerosene in lamps. The lamps had big green china shades shaped like inverted bowls, and near these lamps my mother taught me to read. It didn't take long.

"I see a cat," we started with. Followed by, "I see a rat." My mother told me of the great difference between a cat and a rat; dwelling on size, habits, cunning, claws, teeth, all in her wonderful manner, keeping the book closed in her lap. She opened the book and showed me again the two sentences and how the only difference in the two words was that one had a letter *C* and the other a letter *R* and how the *C* could run faster than the *R*, jump on the *R*, kill the *R* and eat the *R*. She said, "Poor *R*," and pretended to cry. And I said "Poor *R*," and laughed. I liked reading from that day until this. She printed in the book, "I see a hat," and drew a picture of a flat derby hat, a high hat, and a lady's hat. Told me that

the *R* and the *C* didn't wear *H* but could, and the people who wore the *H* loved the *C* and hated the *R*. That was the end of my first lesson.

The next day I went with her round the shopping district. I saw the *C* in Macy's sign, and *R* nearly everywhere, and dug out an *H* where I could find it. In a month I could read. And in six months I thought Cinderella was a nice girl but didn't deserve so much as she got. My mother made me, for every story I read, tell her the same story in ten sentences and what I thought of the story in twenty.

Cinderella, I was taught, was the great fairy story of all the ages, and I think now that little Cinders got all but not more than she deserved. My mother squeezed the last little drop out of this story, and, in a way, my Latin lessons started with the little ashes girl. The name told so much. *E-l-l* for little, and the *a,* as is proper, being the first letter in the alphabet, showed the feminine gender.

Waken a million little girls to-day suddenly at the same moment, from Rivington Street to the little Eskimos and ask them: "What were you just dreaming about?" And you will get a million versions of Cinderella. Motors for carriages and for slippers and princes—let the little girls turn over and dream out their dreams before the dogs bark and the alarm clocks sing their anthems of distress. To emphasize that Cinderella was little ashes Fingers told me that *umbrella* was a little shadow, that *umbra* was a shade and that *ella* was always little. "Nothing in the world is so alive, Sammy," she said, "as the dead languages. The dead languages just refuse to die."

CHAPTER V

GREAT JONES STREET

IT WAS my mother's practise to leave the house just before noon. She left me with a new book, a pitcher of milk and a plate of thick brown crackers with holes in them that went way through, and not the imitation holes which I have seen in prison crackers and, for that matter, in all modern crackers. The first thing she ever taught me to draw was one of these crackers. That was easy. She then taught me to draw one cracker lying upon another which was much harder.

I didn't learn to write, I mean to form letters, until I was nine years old. I was eager to learn to write but my mother always said, "Sammy, when you learn to say something I'll teach you to write it. Some day I'll teach you to write. Perhaps you will write for a living."

Poor girl. I learned to write but not from her. For a living? We shall see.

She usually returned about five in the afternoon. If she brought bundles "home" she would leave the bundles and immediately go out with me. That night we would sleep somewhere else; sometimes on Thirty-seventh Street, sometimes on Avenue C, and very frequently on Great Jones Street where the air was redolent of trees that had been long up-rooted. The psychology people say that we can't remember smell; I don't believe it.

Sometimes my mother would be away all night. On those occasions a black woman came to stay with me

and get my breakfast. I believed then that my mother was a good woman, and I know it now, but her absence bothered me. Of course I know now that she might have been in police stations, but at that time I knew nothing of green lights and policemen.

Of our various living places I felt at home only on Gramercy Park and down in Great Jones Street. In the other places we rarely stayed any great length of time. On street, park or avenue we were always three flights up, in the rear, with one of the rooms letting directly on to a fire-escape.

Great Jones, my mother thought, should have been Little Jones. Said her guess was that he was very conceited but the length of the street was the real measure of his size. Three blocks. Broadway to the Bowery. Afraid to cross Broadway and too nice to cross the Bowery.

She was determined that when I grew up I was to be a writer. With the mythical Jones as a hero we made up tales. In Anne's, Jones was a chronic and usually comical sufferer. Jilted or ptomained, short-changed or henpecked, he invariably charged big and fat into the big end of the horn, and emerged from the small end, wan and anemic.

But in my tales Jones was Great. He was Santa Claus to the street, and his gifts went far beyond. He would begin life as a poor boy, and scent a bank burglary plot on the Bowery. He would notify the president of the bank; send the burglars to jail and take the banker's daughter to Grace Church, at Broadway and Tenth, near Wanamaker's store. Or he would begin life rich and win the daughter of a poor minister by his good looks and magnificent deeds, the daughter never knowing

of his wealth or his family carriage until she was married and in the carriage.

Breakfast in Great Jones Street was a late and long affair. The sun shone on my mother's fluffy hair and on the orange marmalade. The sun rays throwing a sharp shadow, I would move the marmalade so that half was brown and half golden, and with her head my mother would play the same trick, a gilt mirror reflecting for her the gorgeous result.

We talked over what I had read and what I was going to read. We had a scale on which I was weighed. Near by was a card showing what I ought to weigh. I always weighed a little less. "Fine," my mother would exclaim. She measured my height. A card showed how tall I ought to be. I was always taller. "Super-fine!" from Anne. My chest she would sometimes measure, but she had no card for standard. "Whatever it is, it is right."

We drew sketches of things in the room, and buildings across the way. We read aloud to each other. When she read, particularly in Dickens' stories, she would put down the book and say, "Now, Sammy, tell me what's going to happen. Does David marry Dora or Agnes? Does Smike escape? What happens to Squeers? To Pipp? To Dolly Varden? Does Fagan win or lose? Who is going to die? Who is going to live?"

Continuing to read she would wink down when I was right and wink up when I was wrong. When Little Nell died I had said she wouldn't die. And when she did I wouldn't cry. I said, "She didn't have to die." And mother said, "She wouldn't die these days, but in those days tears were fashionable, weekly papers were expensive and working people who put up their good, good money for a cry were going to have it or buy another paper."

CHAPTER VI

THE NEGRESS, "EYES"

I WAS probably about eight years old when Eyes, a colored woman of whom I must speak but can not recommend, began to come to our different places of living. Her eyes were entirely white. Her hair was incurled into her scalp and when she went about putting the rooms in order I remember that her huge size caused her to enter closet and pantry doors sidewise. Her rolled-up sleeves showed gigantic arms. Upon which were little marks as if in times gone by she had used them for pin-cushions; and sometimes as if in times not gone by so far. Now and then mother would look at Eyes' arms and say reproachfully. "Oh, Eyes, how can you?"

The big black would laugh and say, "Miss Fingers, that ain't it. How *can* I. How *can't* I. That's what it is. How can't I." She would brush her forearms furiously as if she were dusting the bookcases or beating a rug.

As a rule, Eyes did her work when mother was out. Occasionally mother wouldn't come home nights. Then Eyes remained, sleeping on top of rugs which she placed on the kitchen floor.

"Sammy," she said one night, "or Mistah Sammy, as I might say if I was the right kind of a niggah, it was

these yere arms what brought you to this city." I looked at her arms. They had a fresh set of reddish pimples.

"Yes, *sir,* it was me who brought you from the Island to the Gates of Joy and Freedom. Doan yo' say to yo' mother what I says to yo' or I'll twist yo' little bastard neck." Her eyes flashed like searchlights in day-time; flashing but not searching.

She went into the pantry and returned in much better humor. "Lying I was," she said. "Yo' mother was in school when yo' was bawn. And believe this smoke she was a big learner. She come in knowin' nothing and goes out knowing all. I was a happy duster, but yo' mother was queen of the molls. Yo' run right to bed."

In the morning mother hadn't returned. Eyes had a queer look. I had heard her walking in the night, and she seemed to stagger as she brought my breakfast. Her eyes were extinguished.

The telephone rang. Eyes answered, listening and grunting, and now and then swearing. I had not yet eaten.

"Yo' ma says fo' yo' to go straight to Gramercy Park. Yo' can eat yo' breakfast there. Walk to Forteenth Street, up Irving Place, then over and up."

She soon was taking dresses, new and never worn, and packing them furiously in a clothes-basket; dresses and many other things which she took from a big box lounge.

I finally mustered courage to say, "I'll tell my mother you are stealing her things."

"Yo' go right up and tell her. But go quick. She is waitin' on yo', honey, and she likes a big laugh."

I went out. Perplexed a little by the traffic, I stood for a moment on the Bowery opposite the Dry Dock Bank. A big black woman shuffled by. On her head was balanced a clothes-basket with a fresh laundered ruffled bedspread, tucked in at the edges. Ahead of her walked a thin-faced Jew. I have seen tugs towing barges when I couldn't see the tow-lines. Neither Eyes nor the Jew spoke or looked, but Eyes was the barge, and the Jew was towing her south to a friendly harbor, past shoals in uniform.

Arrived at Gramercy Park my mother met me with a hug at the first-floor door. Breakfast was ready and we ate together.

"Eyes," I said, "stole a lot of your dresses. I saw her carrying them——"

"No, Sammy. Mother told her to take them and sell them. You never saw little Anne wearing them. They weren't very pretty."

"Oh!" I said. "But Eyes told me——"

"Eyes says lots of things. She was your nurse once and very good, but Eyes isn't herself. Don't mind her. We are going to live here now for a long, long time and then we are going to Italy. Sometime."

"Eyes got mad," I persisted, "and said if I told you anything she would wring my bastard neck. What's that?"

"Eyes won't be with us much longer," my mother answered. "And 'bastard neck' is not a nice word. Eyes is not a nice lady. You finish your breakfast. Mother has to go out. You walk around and watch the children play. Eyes will be here to get your lunch." She was putting on her hat. In her bedroom was a clothes-basket, with a bed spread thrown over.

"Good-by, Sammy dear." She kissed me. Never did

she look so pretty and never were her eyes so dark with action.

She left but in a moment I heard a key in the lock. I had just picked up the dictionary. Mother took it from my hand. "I'm going to return this for a larger one, unabridged. Any word you were looking for, Sammy?"

"Yes. 'Bastard,'" said I.

"Nasty words are not in the dictionary," she said. "Back to-night." Again she kissed me and again she went out, taking the dictionary.

I re-covered some toast with marmalade, for I seldom bit way through when alone. Eyes came in and went out with the clothes-basket. In the hallway, waiting, was the thin-faced Jew.

After breakfast I took my cap, one of them I liked best, for its oversize, and went out into Gramercy Park. The Park was for the exclusive use of the rich families who owned the facing houses. It was surrounded by high iron pickets with sharpened points. On every side of the park, at the middle part of the fence, was a wicket gate, padlocked, and within these gates were nurses and governesses and baby-carriages, dolls, hoops, toys and a large man in a green uniform whom the nurses and children called Tom.

As I had done many times before, I wandered and wandered on the four sides of the Park. I knew I had a father, a very wicked one, who had run away from my mother and gone to Italy to live and some day it was my definite intention to kill him. But that could wait. I loved to read, but not all the time. My mother rarely knew her neighbors, except over in Avenue C, when she had many times to decline to join other tenants in "a friendly pail of suds." I was lonely. Just beginning

to be. All of my book acquaintances gathered in twos and threes and sometimes in mobs, as in *The Tale of Two Cities.* But mother and me? We had our games but always with each other. The shouts of the boys and girls inside the Park were not of, by or for me. Outside of a street fight now and then on Avenue C or Thirty-seventh Street I was seldom noticed. Why?

A lady was opening one of the gates with a yellow key. I thought the key was made of gold. "You come in, too," she said.

I took off my cap, doing it very well, and said, "Thank you," as I had been taught in many rehearsals.

The gate was locked behind me. I was soon in games and thinking of new ones. It was, "Sammy, come on. I choose Sammy." The lady had asked my name and had evidently told Tom who had circulated the news. I did cart-wheels and showed my somersaults. I was the last to leave. "Meet you to-morrow, Sam. Come early." A little group of girls and boys gathered in circular and solid formation. "One, two, three!" shrieked a little girl in blue and white. "We-like-Sammy!" shrieked a chorus of little girls in white and blue. I took off my cap to wave it, but passed it over my eyes to cover them and feebly waved my disengaged hand. Tom and the lady were standing near me. My greatest day.

"We close now," said Tom.

"But every day," said the lady, "you rattle the gate or any of them and Tom will let you in."

On the far side of the Park I saw my mother returning home. Breathless I caught her before she could get to our house. We had dinner at Sill's and then went to a theater. What a happy, happy night!

CHAPTER VII

PIG-TAILS

I HATED Eyes, and I was promised that I would never see her again. "Not for ninety days, sure," my mother said. She asked me many, many things about the children and the games in the Park, but all I could say was "Great fun," or "Fine time," or "Wonderful children."

All that spring and all that summer we lived near Gramercy Park and every day I played in the Park; mother often watching me through the picket fences. She was at home much of the time, and never went out forenoons. When she came home she rarely brought bundles, except a few things for me. The dictionary she never brought. "You must learn better the use of the words you know. You know enough," she said when I asked her about the dictionary.

With the coming of summer many of my little boy and girl friends left for the sea shore or the mountains, but we always had enough for games. I was asked to other houses for lunch and now and then I took a boy home with me.

On the warmest days mother and I took the Monmouth boat, down by the Statue of Liberty, to Atlantic Highlands, leaving in early morning and returning about sunset. On other days we went to the East River. To

ocean beaches she never would go, but she loved diving from the piers into the river. She was the only woman or girl who went there. We would dress at home and drive to and from the pier in horse-cabs or taxi-cabs. She wore a short black skirt and a red bathing cap. She had learned to dive on the beaches of Belgium and Northern France. Of her body, she made a slim letter "S" in mid-air, and the boys were too busy trying to copy her, and too admiring, to be offensive. She showed them other figures and in return they taught me to float and swim. Anne, they taught the crawls and trudgeons, which had come from Australia without stopping on the coasts of Belgium and Northern France.

Once when there was talk of fighting, my mother, about to dive, said, "Sammy will fight any boy less than two years older and less than ten pounds heavier, and from others I'll ask you to defend him." "We'll drown 'em!" yelled the boys both big and little. I had no fights and many were my friends and all were my mother's.

That summer there were many concerts on roofs, at St. Nicholas Rink, and other places. My mother, when she looked, was a very good finder, and we often took some boy home to dinner and afterward to a band concert. The dinner we all selected in a Third Avenue delicatessen store, all helped carry home, and all helped get it into plates and on to the table. When mother and I got home after the concert all the dishes had been cleaned away, by whom I did not know. I feared that it was Eyes.

With the coming of September there were no more concerts and no swimming in the river, but Gramercy

Park was again filled with boys and girls. The afternoons were crisp and cool, and on the boys' side of the Park we chose sides and played football. I played halfback and played it desperately. If I could run five yards I could hear a shrill little voice from the girls' side of the Park, "Good boy, Sammy," and hearing the voice I usually found inspiration to run or crawl as many yards more. There were other voices, though, and other inspirations, and often I was rolled upon my nose and stood upon my head. Our games attracted crowds of boys to the sidewalks and their language was of such indecent and abusive character, because they were not allowed to come in and play, that an old and rather fat policeman was put on a special post to protect the little girls' ears. He had been on post, so rumor went, at Twenty-third Street and Fifth Avenue for nearly twenty years, and having fallen arches, was glad to be where he could now and then sit down. He was very sullen but we attributed his face to the fallen arches.

The name of the girl whose "Good boy, Sammy!" had thrilled me to deeds of juvenile valor and endurance was Suzanne Stuart.

On a blustering afternoon when darkness checked our game and the wind was making winter deposits of leaves I was bold enough to say, "Suzanne, I think I kind of play better when—when you look on and say something."

"You know darned well you do," she replied. Her steel-gray eyes looked hard at me as she threw her two yellow pig-tails over her shoulders. To her reply I said something. I think it was "Thank you."

Without asking I walked close behind her as she left the Park. and stayed there until she stopped in front of

a house on the south side of—I think it was Twentieth Street.

"I live here with my aunt, just now," Suzanne said as she slowed her steps. "My aunt. She has no children and my mother is gone away to Heaven, and my father goes off preaching a lot. He is an Episcopal curate when he is home, but he does mission work a whole lot in Minnesota and North Dakota." I stood mute, absorbing her confidences.

She bounded up the steps, her pig-tails flying and a finger aimed at an electric push-button. Then turning she said, "Sammy, we lunch to-morrow, which as you very well know is Saturday, at half after one o'clock and I am always allowed one guest. The number of this house is right in front of your nose if you lift it."

I think I lifted my cap. I know I read the street number of the wide high house, made of sandstone and cleaned and washed until in the pores of its skin was nothing at all.

A door opened and a butler appeared. He wore no coat but he stood very straight and looked like both of the only butlers I had ever seen. One in *Little Lord Fauntleroy,* and the other in a funny paper I had read while having my hair cut. He held the collar of Suzanne's tan coat. She wriggled out of it and disappeared, and, very happy, I went home.

Still happier was my mother. She had heard Mr. Stuart preach. She said that the Garrisons and all his other relatives were rich and owned horses and dogs and hated automobiles.

Saturday was long in coming but soon after breakfast my mother took me out to buy me a blue suit of

clothes, with long trousers, some shirts with wide, white, turn-down collars and a hard black hat.

When I left her to go to Mrs. Garrison's she said, "When you listen look all the time at the one who talks. But if you say anything, except to answer a question, look at one, then another, and then another." She hugged me good-by. Each of her eyes was a big blue tear.

At a small table in a great big room was Mrs. Lanny Garrison. She was eating but wore a hat. She was very beautiful and long-legged. She kept kicking my feet under the table. There was her mother-in-law who also wore a hat.

The table and the silver plainly said, "It took money to buy us." And as plainly the elder Mrs. Garrison said, "Dear me, who should know that better than I?"

Suzanne introduced me. The two Mrs. Garrisons did all the talking, but the younger one kicked me intentionally once in a while and winked me into the family circle. The butler patrolled the room like a collie dog while another man and a girl brought and took away the dishes. Suzanne's Aunt Lanny smoked cigarettes, her elbows on the table. If a dish was in her way she pushed it around and drew it back to her if she wanted something more on her fork.

After lunch Suzanne showed me the conservatory and a room with a large pipe organ in it. In the latter room I asked if I could call her Pig-tails, and after deliberation she said, "Publicly, never."

There was a football game that afternoon at three o'clock. "You'd better be good and fit for the game," Pig-tails said solemnly. She was the oldest little girl in words and manner that I had ever seen.

"Go right home and take a nap," she continued. "Samson was strong because he slept so much."

"I'll go," I said obediently, "but first I'd like to say good-by to your aunt."

"Why, they've gone to the matinée, ages ago."

I walked slowly around the corner to the place where we were then living. A feeling had commenced that never ended, and when it is old enough it is named and christened Love.

That afternoon I played football with fury and Suzanne shrieked to our quarterback, "Give it to Sammy, you simp! What do you think you're doing? Give it to Sammy!" And quite often he did. What a wonderful afternoon!

When the game was over Suzanne said, "I tell you, Sam-mee, when you get the spirit of Pig-tails Stuart hopping around on Sammy Leaubeau's legs something has got to get out of the way." She cocked one eye and said a piece of music-hall slang. Other children of the rich used the same slang but I can't remember it.

Every afternoon we had a game, and one day my mother, beautiful and beautifully dressed, as always, came to the sidewalk and peered through the iron picket fence. She applauded when I carried the ball or toppled a boy over. She had promised to come and I did my super-best.

That afternoon Suzanne's father came to the Park and took her for a walk. He was thin and tall and wore black clothes with a little strip of white collar and a black hat that was shaped like the top of a toad-stool. I had been playing hard and didn't know that Suzanne was gone until the game was over.

CHAPTER VIII

WE LOSE OUR STANDING

I WALKED home with my mother, the fat policeman trudging slowly behind. Near the corner where we stopped before crossing the street, he touched me on the shoulder. "You done good, kid," he said. "What is your name?"

"Sammy," I answered with pride.

"Sammy what?" he asked.

"Torello," my mother said quickly. "Sammy Torello."

"Thank you, ma'am," the policeman said. He looked at my mother hard and sullenly, and added with a quince-like smile, "Thank you very much." Then he waddled across Lexington Avenue, where he was joined by Tom, the Park attendant in the green uniform.

Mother and I went home. Standing in the middle of the kitchen floor, feet wide apart as if on a deck in a stormy sea, was the big negress of whom I was in such fear.

"Why, Eyes!" my mother exclaimed.

"I'se been out a week," Eyes said defiantly.

"I know," my mother said, "of course, but how did you get in here? You gave me back the key before you went away."

"I had the keyhole in wax and got a key made," said Eyes.

"Give it to me at once." Eyes handed her a key. "Have you another one?"

"I can't rememba'. I has or I hasn't, but which way, has or hasn't, I couldn't say. Ef yo' hasn't any clothes or anything for me to sell——"

"Come here to-morrow, Eyes," my mother interrupted, "at twelve o'clock. I shall have no clothes, but I'll give you some money."

"I'll bet yo' yo' life yo' will," said Eyes, clenching her fists high like hammers about to fall. My mother trembled like a leaf.

"But how about a few bucks right now. I needs a couple of shots. Coke and dust I mixes in half and half. Al says 'It's a powda' cocktail.' Al's out and livin' back with me but he's got no money, an' he hops it mo' than I does. We'se takin' snow in flakes and we need it in drifts. A few bucks to kill the night off—what do yo' say, Fingers? Yo' can't stan' me up."

My mother, followed by Eyes, went to a drawer and said, "Here is five dollars."

"That all?" Eyes took the money. "We'll lump our accounts to-morrow, Fingers, so be ready, strong."

She left hurriedly, and mother and I went out a little later and had a fish dinner at Dorland's on Madison Square. A smiling mask of bravery did not entirely cover her worried face, and while she spoke frequently her tone did not encourage conversation.

Eyes didn't come the next day, or the next or the next. For three days it rained, but on the first pleasant afternoon I went again to Gramercy Park and rattled the gate for Tom to open. Tom was standing near and he heard me and saw me, but he walked slowly to the

farther side of the Park. One of the boys cried, "Hey, Tom, let him in. It's Sammy." Tom shook his head and walked farther away. Other children cried, "Oh, Tom, it's Sammy."

Somewhat discouraged I again shook the gate. "Cut that out, kid," said the policeman behind me. "Tom ain't going to let you in. It's orders."

"Whose orders?" I asked.

"Mine."

"Why?"

"Ask your mother. These are ladies whose children play here. Say, kid, you beat it home and tell your mother to move. Move or get moved. Get me? Lam, screw and gevick. She'll understand. Tell her," he said, "that the old cop at Twenty-third and Fifth is looking to retire on a pension. That he knows her and other cops know he knows her. I'm sorry but I can't stand a rap what would move me off of my post. I got a big family and bad feet, tell that to Fingers. Tell it to your ma."

I walked slowly away, and on the corner I met Suzanne walking with her father.

"This is my father, Sammy," the little girl said. And added to him, "The little boy I told you about."

I was ashamed to have a little girl, at least that little girl, see me cry. I got far as I could in saying, "How do you do, sir?" and ran fast away.

"Sammy, come right back here," Suzanne called after me, but I kept running.

My mother was at home when I got there. She was whistling gaily and dressing to come to the Park. I repeated to her what the police officer had said.

"I thought I remembered him," she murmured. "Twenty-third and Fifth." She sat on the edge of her bed. "Twenty-third and Fifth. Sammy, how old are you?"

"Nine, aren't I?"

"Do you know how children are made and born?"

"I think so," I answered. "Why?"

"If you think so, you know so," she said. "To-night I'll tell you lots of things and soon, soon, soon, we'll go to Italy. Me for a husband and you for a daddy. Soon, soon, soon! Sammy, come with me."

We went into the street. Twice my mother came to a full stop and said aloud to herself, at the first stop, "Anne, you will always love Joe Torello." At the second stop she said, "You kept petting Torello. What you should have petted was Torello's violin."

CHAPTER IX

HUNTED

NEAR the Westminster Hotel, in Irving Place, we took a horse-cab. My mother gave no address, but we trotted briskly north, then east through Twentieth Street. At Gramercy Park a football game was being played and a boy was running and the little girls in blue and white were leaping in the air and cheering. I looked steadily south as if I didn't see. My mother was crying. At Avenue C we turned north and were soon in front of the house in which I had not been for many weeks. I stood on the walk while mother whispered to the driver. She was pale and tired. Climbing the stairs she walked slowly, and on the second landing stopped.

"Sammy," she said, "cross your heart and say to me this: 'If mother ever asks me I will do it for mother's sake.' "

I crossed my heart and said, "If mother ever asks me I will do it for mother's sake."

"And do it at once and not a question."

" 'And do it at once and not a question,' " I repeated.

"To-night, dearie, my fine, brave, dear, little boy, mother will tell you much and then I'll ask you——"

"Ask me what?"

"Will you do it? Cross your heart."

"Yes." And again I crossed my heart.

"I think perhaps that to-night—yes, I think we will. Come, Sammy, with me." She walked down-stairs, and I followed.

"Yes," she continued, "we'll sleep this night at Great Jones Street. I'll have to find Eyes. We'll have early dinner and mother will go out. But I'll soon be back. Must cable and see about ocean tickets and lots of things. Dispose of clothes and things that mother doesn't need."

The cab was waiting and the driver climbed on to his box.

"Great Jones," said my mother, "and not by Gramercy Park." She snuggled her cheek against mine and I dove-tailed my fingers into hers.

"Sammy," she said, sliding to the front of the seat so that her head fell more closely on my shoulder, "you are taller than I."

"And bigger, too," I said. "I could take care of you now, anytime. Haven't you noticed crossing the streets lately how—how I kind of go first—or go last, kind of according to where the danger is. Mammy, hadn't you noticed that?"

"Yes, Sammy, of course I have. You are growing so fast. Put your toes down where mine are."

Extending my legs as directed, my broad brown shoes were near her little black slippers.

"You are so much longer," she said. And surveying me carefully, "Your shoulders are high too. All of you is higher. You will be tall some day." My toes to hers, my head just reached her shoulder.

Then more slowly, measuring her words and wig-wagging her pretty slippers: "I expected that you would

be tall. Your father was such a whale of a brute. Is—I suppose——" She shuddered.

Through a side-street but a short block away I could hear a chorus of little girls cheering our team, led by the old familiar voice. A quick look and I saw the last Gramercy gates; closed to me forever. Gates are closed tighter in front of you than any doors are locked behind you. I'm not guessing. I know.

Arrived in Great Jones Street, our cab still waiting, my mother went at once to her room, and reached for the telephone but it began to ring before she could reach it. She closed the door.

Our patient, silent books were covered with dust so deep that the titles on their backs could not be seen, but a dictionary is a dictionary, and I turned the dusty pages for "bastard."

"Sammy, come in here, will you?" My mother stood in the open door, flushed and beautifully decisive.

I put down the dictionary and went into the bedroom.

"So *big* you are," she said. "Your poor young mother, when she was a little old baby, was allowed to drop on her little old head.—Sit down.—Sometimes it aches. Here near me, on the edge of the bed. Where we'll never sit again.—I suppose a doctor could go in up here," she brushed her forehead, "with a shiny little spade. When it goes in, it's a knife, and in there it's a pick ax, and coming out it's a rake and a carpet sweeper. A spadudulum, they call it, Sammy, but it leaves marks. Now don't you speak, Sammy. When mother asks, you cross your heart. Mother knows best." She was talking with a great rapidity, as if limited for time and had to pick subject as well as words.

"Eyes takes happy-dust. Drugs. The police put her in a room and take away her dust. Cold turkey, they call it. Eyes is Eyes. She must have talked. I can't reach her anywhere, and she should be here."

"I am glad," I said, "that you can't find——"

"No, no, you're not. Sammy doesn't know. When Torello came back—that was his place in Thompson Street—he wanted me, but not you. And I let him go back. I took you, but if we go over there—to Italy—I'll make him take us both. Just make him. Make his love make him. I *am* so smooth, but she petted the fiddle and I petted Giuseppe. And I have saved so much. Oh, yes, Sammy, I asked you in to tell you that your mother is a thief. Mother can't stand it alone, and she has got to tell. Tell *you*." She looked at me, and I looked at her. Then slowly she told me those things about her and about me, and about my "sire" which I told you at the beginning of my story. She smiled me into hugs and kisses.

"Tell me, Sammy, what do you think of a thief?"

Bewildered and thinking of Gramercy Park and Eyes I said, "Of the other thieves, the same as always—but you, you, mother, I couldn't love you more, or any one else and I never, never will."

We drew each other close, she moving more than me, so much stronger was I.

"Your mother is a thief!" Numbed beyond feeling, I stood the news bravely. Where was the pain? Ask not the onlooker of an accident who is brave or not brave. Wait till the pain comes. Ask hospital nurses, not ambulance surgeons, who are the brave. Nature says when and the where is part of her when. Do suicides pick

March and clouds or do March and the clouds pick suicides?

In these moments I was brave, but with no shoulders but my own, on a slippery feather bed, in the farm-house of a new father and second mother, I cried with the prairie winds a part of every night. What she was. Where she was. What I was and where. Also I cried for my little friends in Gramercy Park. But stories should follow the clock.

My mother loosened herself from me and sat upright and rigid. We speak of flushing a quail. What word does the quail use? Police.

Sounds on the stairs of feet squarely planted and slowly picked up. Then a heavy knock on the door. The police have a knock of their own and have never been able to change it, but hearing is safest when confirmed by sight, and my mother snapped herself from the bed to the opposite wall where there was a small hole, eye-high, protected by a wall-papered shutter the size of a dime. A dark screen cut off rays of light. With fingers on lips, and with a look, lovely from leaping excitement, Anne Leaubeau Torello shot the shutter and closed it, then dropped to the floor and said sweetly through the crack between door and sill, "I am not quite dressed yet. Wait just a moment, sweetheart, and I'll let you in. Sorry because I promised not to keep you waiting."

Her fingers still on her lips and with one hand beckoning me to follow, she raised the window quickly but without noise and stepped on to the platform of the fire-escape. We descended backward, eyes toward the sky, like cats on tree trunks, and when nearly to the

ground, we turned, as cats do, and finished the distance by leaping. We slipped through the back door of Paul Kelly's Brighton Hotel and out on to the street. The driver, sitting on the box of our waiting cab, saw us as we turned the corner into the Bowery but remained steadfast to deceive, like the lighted cigar in Sherlock Holmes.

On Broome Street, just off the Bowery, was a cab-stand where the Italian bootblack of the Occidental Hotel doubled as shiner of shoes and caller of cabs.

"May I have this cab?" my mother asked, with one foot on the step of a waiting cab. In a fury of words and gestures the Italian bootblack finally gained sufficient control of himself to say, "Thata cab ees wait for Bigga Timothy Sullivan. Letta that cab to be."

"Take it, Fingers," said Big Tim, himself, emerging spick, span and cherubic from the barber-shop door. With a strong hand he boosted me on to the seat beside my mother, who was already whispering instructions to the driver through a hole in the roof of the cab.

"You are in more of a hurry than me," Big Tim added with as much of a bow as rulers ever allowed themselves.

"Thank you," my mother said. "You are an angel in the service of the devil."

"No, a devil serving an angel," said Tim. "Beat it."

We whirled into the Bowery and turned east on Canal Street, bumping our way over cobble-stones into the great East Side.

"Only one person in the whole town, Sammy, is Big Tim's enemy, and every morning Big Tim shaves him, dresses him and buys him a great big breakfast. Just

think of it, Sammy, being so nice to your own worst enemy. What *would* a man do for his friend?"

With his money gone the great Tim Sullivan was some day to lie in the morgue awaiting identification. He had been found dead on a railroad track and just before he was to be buried in Potter's Field a policeman said, "That's Tim," and the Bowery said, "Did you hear about Tim?"

Is there such a thing as luck? Race-horses are sometimes aptly named. Burgomaster's dam was Wooden Shoes; Borrow was out of Forget; Regret was out of Jersey Lightning; and Song and Dance was by the Bard out of Heel and Toe; Tester and Noah are full brothers out of First Flight. Yes, there is luck, and my pedigree, if laid out as horses are named, would be Samuel Leaubeau by Villain out of Hard Luck; she by Smiles out of Lack of Wisdom; she by Courage out of Good Looks by Quit out of Cricket by Never Say Die. And so back up into the trees where none were given in marriage. No ants in my pedigree, but not the less we shall march. We have many places to which we must go.

CHAPTER X

BETRAYED BY EYES

AT ALLEN Street we drove under the elevated tracks, left the cab at Grand Street, climbed the stairs and boarded the north-bound elevated train. We got off the train at Eighth Street and stood on the platform, and got on to the next train. We did this at Fourteenth Street and again at Forty-second. My mother seemed satisfied at last that no one was following her and at the Murray Hill Hotel she ordered breakfast for us both at a table near a window.

"I expect to be back in ten minutes, Sammy. But stay right here until I come back."

She left and a moment later I saw her rounding the corner. She was running. The waiter who had taken our order asked me if I had money. I said, "No."

"A watch?" he asked.

I showed it to him, and he soon brought my breakfast. Ravenously hungry I ate, but was scarcely finished when my mother, dismounting from a cab, waved merrily to me and made a rounding gesture over her waist, pantomiming the amount of food I had eaten. Her gaiety was a relief.

In a moment she was by my side. She drank her coffee standing and paid the waiter, who bowed his thanks until we were gone.

Once in the cab the driver, with no word from mother, crossed Fifth Avenue, and then down Eighth to our place in Thirty-seventh Street. My mother went in and soon returned, carrying many burdles of irregular sizes, mostly wrapped in newspapers. Again she left and returned with bundles.

"Moving, ma'am?" asked a near-by policeman, touching his cap.

My mother answered, "No, just giving away some old summer clothes."

The cabby drove to Eighth Avenue, and then down and over to Sheridan Square. We stopped in front of a dingy store. The cabby asked me to stand at the horse's head. He and my mother carried the bundles into the store. When they came out my mother shook hands with the cabby and he drove off alone.

She hailed a four-wheeler and we both got in. The driver, grizzled and squat, awaited directions. My mother was perplexed, and undecided. She fingered a large roll of bills as a waiter would finger an inadequate tip.

"I said I was giving them away," she muttered, "and I did. Eyes did so much better." Then placing the bills under the waist of her dress, she gave the driver the number of our house on Avenue C. Crossing Broadway my mother threw a kiss at Wanamaker's store, and at other places en route, including a fur shop.

Again I had a fleeting glimpse of the fence and gates at Gramercy Park. For my little mother I had a sudden aversion, but the disloyal thoughts were transient and in affectionate remorse I cuddled closer to her side.

On the down-town corner of the block in which we lived, my mother paid our driver and dismissed him.

To the door of our house we walked, and up the stairs to where we had spent a great many nights, but not in succession and not for a long, long time.

"Once in Italy," my mother said, as she unlocked the door of our flat, "I'll make Torello love you, Sammy. If I had to choose between you, at least as I think of it now, Signor Torello is very much second. Torello is sweet but so are you, and Sammy is twice as strong. I won't cable. We'll just go."

We were soon in my mother's bedroom, overlooking a fire-escape. Scattered on her bed was an uncountable multitude of silk things, fur things and lace things; brushes and combs with silver backs, and other articles of tortoise shell and gold; and in a chair beside the bed, her head in her hands, was Eyes.

"Why, Eyes!" my mother exclaimed, "I didn't know you were here. And all of these things we left safely wrapped up."

Eyes stared sullenly and said nothing, her eyes flashing and dying by turns like a go-and-stop sign.

"Why did you come here? What do you mean?"

"The flatties locked me up in Jefferson Market and took my hop away," said Eyes. "I done cold turkey till I couldn't stand it no longer and when the cops said they'd give me a couple of shots I showed 'em—this." She spread her hands over the stolen plunder.

"Eyes, did you tell on me?" my mother asked, frantic with fear and searching Eyes' face for truth.

"I done told 'em nothing. I only showed 'em," said Eyes, turning her head from the evidence to which she had led the police.

"Get that down, Jim," said a bass voice louder with

his approach. "Use it as admission. 'Eyes, did you tell on me?' Put it down in your book."

In a moment three detectives were in the room; all with coats opened to show the central office shield attached to a suspender.

My mother turned, smiling. "Gentlemen, what do you want?"

"You," said the one who looked oldest. "Billy," he said to the one who looked youngest, "take the oak to the bathroom and allow her just one shot of the stuff."

Eyes, not led, bustled her great weight behind the young detective and left the room, shaking, and heaping upon herself a torrent of filthy abuse, all of which was probably properly bestowed.

Lurking in the next room was Al, the man she had "gone back to live with." He called her his honey and his molasses drop, and Eyes addressed him monosyllabically and with Elizabethan candor.

Al's yellow face recorded no shame for Eyes' affectionate tone had lightened the content of the words. He merely avoided, by a step to one side, her careening bulk, as a motor-boat gives way to a ferry, respecting the tonnage but not the character of the craft.

With Eyes gone the detective proceeded to frisk my mother. A superficial search by the police is called a frisk, and the word is interchangeably a noun or verb.

My mother had evidently known the oldest of the three detectives before, for when the search became annoying she said, "Say, Jim, honest, don't you think a matron at the station-house——"

Jim interrupted her. "But, Fingers, you are going straight to court."

"And besides," one of the other detectives added, "what a matron can wear—well, some of us cops has got wives and——" Jim stopped him with a look as he pulled off my mother's slippers to shake and tap the heels to see if they were hollow.

My mother laughed. "Never cared for jewelry," she said.

Jim, not satisfied, wrenched the heels to see if they were on screws, while the other detectives stuffed the articles on the bed into blue silk pillow-slips and wrapped some of the more bulky things in a silk and lace bed-spread.

Jim stepped to the telephone. "A patrol wagon on the jump," he said, "and get this address the way I give it." He gave the street number slowly, and the number was requested back. My mother and I gripping hands tightly watched the detectives packing away beautiful things and making a list of them.

"Sorry to make this collar, Fingers," Jim said, "but you are overdue."

"Don't mention it," my mother responded flippantly, "but be sure you get your reward and don't forget Eyes."

"I got a daughter," said Jim, "who wants to go to business school—and out of this reward——" My mother crying softly, the detective desisted.

"The Gerry Society will take your kid," he added, "and they'll get him adopted."

The clang of a gong below announced the arrival of the patrol wagon. Through an open window I looked down and saw a pair of bay horses attached to a large covered wagon, and a fat sergeant. Around and about

stood a crowd of people. Women on the outer edge, most of them carrying babies, and men and boys near the door of the house and the door of the wagon. The neighborhood was getting a treat. Some left the crowd to spread the news, and the crowd grew steadily larger.

"Are the kid's clothes stolen?" asked Jim, jerking his thumb toward me.

"No," my mother replied. "They were bought with money that I earned."

"Earned is good," said the youngest detective.

"I earned it," said my mother, straightening her hat, "just the way you earn the money that you get which is over and above your salary."

All the detectives laughed spontaneously and as suddenly stopped; spontaneity giving way to discretion.

"I am ready," said my mother. "Can Sammy go with me?"

"He's got to go with you," said Jim, "but he won't be with you long."

I began to cry. My mother put her hand over my mouth and said, "Remember, Sammy, you crossed your heart if mother ever asked you to do anything——"

"I'll do it," said I. I stopped crying.

Two detectives carrying bundles went out first, followed by my mother. Jim brought up the rear, leading me by the hand. His own hand was very big but it felt soft and kind.

When we got to the sidewalk bluecoats cleared a space, and we were soon in the patrol wagon, all of us, with the heavy bundles on the floor and the pillow-slips on one of the seats. Some of the lacier articles from the pillow-slips the detectives put in their pockets.

My mother laughed and said, "Your wives will compliment you on your taste and believe me, if your wives had bought them they would cost more and not be half so pretty."

My mother asked if she could move her seat and sit next to me. She was allowed to do so. I expected to be kissed and hugged and I think that I didn't want to be. My mother, when young, must have been a little boy in her heart as well as a little girl, for she contented herself by resting her hand on my shoulder with an occasional clutch at the back of my neck. I supposed that we were going to jail but we were on our way to the Yorkville Police Court in West Fifty-seventh Street.

A little short magistrate with a bald head greeted us in court and told the detectives that he had an engagement and had very little time to take up a new case. He asked my mother if she wanted a lawyer and she said no.

The magistrate asked. "Do you waive examination?" And she answered, "Yes."

That meant there would be no long hearing and the magistrate became quite jovial and complimented the detectives on their excellent and intelligent work, and signed a commitment paper with such a flourish of the pen that a drop of ink hit a discouraged clerk in the eye.

The detective named Jim brought a paper from a near-by room and, placing it before the judge, asked, "Will your honor sign an order of improper guardianship? This woman is a well-known thief; has been locked up before and is known to the police as 'Fingers Anne.'"

"Sure, I'll sign," replied the magistrate. He signed the paper and said, "This court is adjourned," and disappeared quickly and completely as a cat over a high board fence.

Jim said to my mother, "I'll have to take you to the Tombs and an officer of the Gerry Society will take charge of your kid."

"I am ready," said my mother. "Give me just a minute."

I put my arms around her neck and began to cry.

"Remember, Sammy," my mother said, "you crossed your heart and said when mother asks you'll do."

"Yes, mother," I said, "what is it?"

The detectives walked away from us, two toward a far corner, while Jim placed himself between us and the street door and looked about him carelessly as if any idea of my mother's trying to escape was far from his mind. She acknowledged their courtesy with a nod and then put her hands upon my shoulders. Tears were in her eyes but she held them there until she could wink them away.

"Go where they take you, Sammy, and somebody nice, with no children of their own, will adopt you. Me you'll have to forget. You mustn't write me, and I won't write you. Adopted children must be torn up by the roots, sure, Sammy. Now listen to mother. Unless you do what I say they'll take you to a home or a protectory or a house of refuge. You crossed your heart and mother is asking." She threw her arms around my neck.

"Learn to write, Sammy. Write for money. I mean be a writer and sometime mother will read your books and tell you what——"

She suddenly released me and turning to the detectives shrieked at them, "Why don't you take me? Get the wagon. How can I do the right thing by Sammy if you give me time to think?" She darted to the street, followed by the detectives.

I heard the patrol wagon rattling on the rough cobbles, and jumping on to a bench I stretched until I could see into the street. On the seat of the wagon was the same fat driver, immovable. In the wagon three detectives were bending and a little white hand was waving.

CHAPTER XI

THE JUKES

FOR nearly two weeks my mother remained in the Tombs. She had told the police she was guilty of stealing a vase of the value of more than five hundred dollars, but she had to remain in a cell for a few days and nights until a group of business men could spare a half day to agree with her in her admission. The group of business men was the Grand Jury. The agreement was an indictment. After the indictment she was given a chance to plead guilty to what the Grand Jury had said about her, based in part upon what she had said about herself. Then she was sent back to the Tombs for a few days awaiting sentence day. During these days I was kept well-fed, warm, and exercised in the rooms of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty of Children. The agents were extremely kind to me. They were cheerful in speech and acted often as if they would like to smile but refrained to escape a charge of levity.

The arrest of Anne Leaubeau had attracted public attention, partly on account of her beauty, partly on account of the extent of her operations, but to a greater extent because of her previous imprisonment during which she had given birth to a child. While she waited in prison, high priced writers of her own sex were busily engaged

in digging deep for facts and more busily engaged in spreading them thin.

To the women who talked to me, I could simply say, "I love my mother." And in heavy ink I read in newspapers: "HE LOVES HIS MOTHER."

The day for sentence came, and a Gerry agent fetched me to court to stand beside my mother.

With a proud look at a battery of camera men she hooked a little finger into mine and clutched it vigorously while the judge occupied himself with reading for a long time in one volume. He turned no pages but kept glancing at the spectators who were hurriedly finding places in which to stand. The seats were all filled when I followed my mother from the rear door of the room to the railing in front of the judge. The judge, while reading, glanced to a table where writers of both sexes were finding seats and making conquests of elbow space on the table or jealously guarding what they had.

The room had become very still, but the judge continued to read for the camera.

"Come, Mr. Judge," my mother said, "the Tombs is full of waiting people. I am ready. You are ready. and this is very hard upon us both. Oh—I forgot—this is Sammy, my little son."

The judge listened in patient amazement, and rather slowly at first but with speed increasing, said, "Madam, in sentencing you I am bound to take into consideration that, while you have pleaded guilty to a single indictment, there are many others which could be predicated upon your offenses for the commission of which you could be easily convicted. On the other hand, fairness requires me to consider that you have pleaded guilty, thus saving

the taxpayers of the city and the county the delay and expense of trial. I am bound further to consider that both in money and in goods you have made restitution to the extent of your ability."

The judge stopped and surveyed audience, writers' table and a woman, doubtless his wife, who occupied one of the few chairs especially reserved within the railing.

"But," he resumed, fixing kindly eyes upon my mother and holding the word *but* about so long as he thought the situation would warrant, "upon the political platform I have many times told the people of this city, the greatest and the richest city in the world, that I believe in a firm administration of justice. My political statements I am willing to reaffirm by judicial act. Your youth, your beauty and your apparent refinement have made you an extremely dangerous woman to those merchants who by industry and enterprise have made the city what it is to-day. Your manner and your dress made it possible for you to mingle with the ladies of elegance who adorn our city and patronize our emporiums. Our metropolitan police have, by their perseverance and their intelligent devotion to duty, finally succeeded in affecting your arrest and accumulating evidence which forces you to plead guilty.

"Leniency upon my part would be an affront, both to our merchants and to our police. Also an affront to those honest people who in the purchase of their goods in shops are obliged to pay indirectly for the losses sustained by merchants from larcenies of the character which you have committed.

"Your youth and your beauty have not only failed

to save you, but they constitute additional reasons why I should punish you to the full extent of the law.

"I am informed that when you were last incarcerated——"

At this point the defendent interrupted and said, "I have only been locked up once, Your Honor."

The Court: "That is the time I refer to. The last time that you were locked up the court is informed that during the period of your incarceration you gave birth to a male child. The court directs that before you commence your term of imprisonment proper authority will conduct an investigation which will satisfy this court that this unfortunate event will not be repeated."

The defendant: "You needn't appoint anybody, Judge, to examine me. I am not with child." A titter went through the room.

The Court: "To your larceny you are adding a wantonness and an effrontery and an offense to this court. Are you a married woman?"

The defendant: "I am."

The Court: "Are you living with your husband?"

The defendant: "I am not."

The Court: "Where is your husband?"

The defendant: "I decline to answer."

The Court, consulting a paper which was handed him by his secretary: "Was that child by your husband?"

The defendant: "No, sir, he was not. If you will allow me to explain——"

The Court: "The court sees no useful purpose in listening to a wanton making excuses for the promiscuous bestowal of her affections. It has nothing to do with the crime of larceny."

"I am ready for sentence," my mother said. I could feel the tightening clutch of her little finger.

"Again I must ask you," the judge said in the kindest tones yet used, "where is your husband?"

"Where you can't get hold of him," my mother replied defiantly.

"Have you ever heard of the Juke family?" the judge asked.

"Yes, I have," replied my mother, pushing me in front of her toward the rail, "and this boy, my Sammy, was born in prison, but he isn't a Juke, and good people ought to take him, and if you keep your mouth shut they will."

The judge gaveled for silence and a court attendant, putting his hand over my mother's mouth, whispered in her ear, "Hand it to him and hand it to him good."

The judge continued, with an occasional glance at a book which lay ready as a witness if any one should question the remarkable statements about to be made. "Margaret Juke," he said, "is known to penologists as the mother of criminals. Born in an Adirondack wilderness in about 1750, she married and became the mother of a child, admittedly illegitimate; a male child. This child married and from the issue of that union in five generations it has been computed by eminent penologists that five hundred——"

My mother interrupted, "I know, Judge. Five hundred Jukes may have been in state's prison for murder, arson and theft, but does this boy look like a Juke? Have you got as good a one at home? Look at him." She faced to the court room, turning me as she whirled. "Does this boy look like a Juke?" She faced the Court.

The judge continued in even and kindly tones, "If in 1750 in the wilderness of northern New York there had been law and order and Courts of Justice and wise and firm judges, this criminal family of Jukes——"

"God damn the Jukes," my mother flamed. "I am ready for sentence." She fell forward, one arm on the rail and one about my neck.

"Five years in the State's Prison for Women," said the judge. "Order in this court."

The defendant was carried down through the court room. As she neared the door leading up and over into the Tombs she turned and threw me a kiss. "Cross your heart, Sammy. You're not a Juke. You do your best and——" A steel door slammed, and my mother was hustled over the Bridge of Sighs to the Tombs.

The agents took me back to the rooms of the society where for many days I was kept well-dressed and smelling of soap. Every Sunday came childless people shopping for children.

CHAPTER XII

CANARIES, PUPPIES AND LITTLE BOYS

TEACHERS examine pupils by questions and give them marks upon their answers after deliberation. The marks are recorded in books. Pupils give teachers marks, but not upon questions and not with deliberation, and the marks are not recorded. But the unrecorded mark of the teacher is the most important thing in education. And this from a jailbird. Let me get on to less presumptuous ground.

When people go shopping for puppies, canaries or little boys, the canaries, puppies and little boys are shopping just as hard. The puppy says, "I'll pick this one." Is he mournful when the master he picked walks out of the shop with another puppy under his arm?

The canary says, "How I could sing my heart out to cheer that sweet lady!" He is carried in a gilded cage by a "lady" to her flat where drunken men and women keep him awake at night and crack his little heart with curses. In a few days his little carcass is dumped on top of a garbage can with faded flowers and empty bottles and uneaten breakfasts.

So many times did I say (to myself, of course), "I'll take this one." But I wasn't taken. Land is sold by deed, horses by bill of sale and canaries you just carry

off. They put your money in a drawer and the canary is wrapped up. A child requires a legal adoption. Before a father will fight for him and a mother will put him to bed they have got to know. My mother was right. Adopters want children pulled up by the roots. Roots well shaken. Best of all with both parents dead. Both of mine were alive.

I was for sale. The consideration on the buyer's part would be love and affection and board and lodging. On my side the consideration was myself and implicit obedience until I was of working age, at which time my wages would become the property of my foster father and my foster mother until I was twenty-one. This information I picked up from one of the legal advisers to the society. He didn't tell me those things but he told them to prospective adopters while I was in the room. He always opened his remarks by saying that the mother of this boy had signed the necessary papers and that a legal adoption would be a mere matter of form. He always closed his remarks by saying in substance, "I feel it my duty to inform you that this young man," with a deferential bow to me, "through no fault of his own, is what is known to the law as a bastard. In fact he was born in a prison. His father is not known to the society. He was born in wedlock and it is a presumption that a child born of a woman is the issue of her husband unless the contrary can be established by evidence. Our investigations show that the woman's husband had been in Italy for a continuous period of eleven months. I think, therefore, that you ladies and you gentlemen will understand that we are constrained to call this child illegitimate."

The ladies and gentlemen so addressed, assured him by a dubious nodding of heads that their studies of natural history permitted a clear understanding of the lawyer's remarks, and thanking him and walking around me to the door they took their various departures.

The lawyer told all visitors who looked at me that by an agreement made with court and with prison authorities, to which my mother had subscribed, my mother could not write to me for a period of one year, and that I could not write to her for one year, and that no correspondence would be permitted us oftener than once a year until my mother was out of prison.

"I'd like to know who is going to stop us," I said once with my heart jarred. "I'm going to write her soon as I can learn to write."

"If it hurt your mother, would you write her?" the lawyer asked. "Would you, sonny?"

"It would help her," I said.

"Each letter will add three months to her prison time," he said. "Letters we consider for you two bad, and your mother would lose her time allowance for good behavior, which, as I said, or should have said, is three months in every year of her five-year sentence."

If I made any reply, I can not recall it, but I realized that somehow, somewhere, I must live in forgetfulness of what had been, and on all sides I was assured that time would do everything and that there was a heaven on earth for those who had the key and that the key was Hope and the door opened into Joy. These assurances were helpful.

Nature is said to abhor a vacuum. Not more than the human mind. It can't stay empty and thoughts of

yesterday can not be banished unless crowded out by thoughts, hopes or desires of to-morrow. The will to forget, to evict tenants and leave the rooms empty is impossible. New tenants must crowd out the old and leave no room for their return. So said Jean Maline, the whistling forger at Sing Sing. But he was not an agent for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. How fine if he could have been!

My days and nights were miserable. I was allowed to read newspapers but cut-out columns made them hard to handle and where the shears had gone an inch too high I eaves-dropped into the history of the Juke family and I shuddered in fear that I was headed for prison.

The memory of Gramercy Park with the bouyant little girl in pig-tails was a pleasant refuge and in the memory I liked to stand as calves stand in cool streams when the ground is hot and dry and hard.

The society rooms were but two squares from Gramercy Park and one day on our walk I asked the agent if we couldn't walk by the Park. He said that we could. There were six or seven juveniles beside myself, all boys. Three of them were colored boys. Viewed as a small herd of calves we were compositely Holstein. It was Saturday afternoon. Children were playing, and Tom was there in his green uniform, and nurses in white and governesses in blue sailor hats and little girls in blue and white dresses, and little boys in brown clothes with khaki faces and hair to match. Babies on green grass were feeding sparrows, and robins were banqueting where gardeners were spading up earth to protect the roots of plants against the coming winter. The boys were playing a championship football match and a grown-up referee

had a whistle in his mouth and wore a Princeton sweater. We were allowed to stop and peek between the iron pickets, chins as far in as we could push them. One of the colored boys, fourteen years old, but a little bit of a chap, had advanced his face too far and had to be extracted with caution.

"Liked to have pulled my head off," he said, and added with a grin: "My old dad got his head in where he never did get it out."

He was the comedian of our group and was sure enough of his audience to come to a long rest between his points.

"They was testing some rope in a county jail down to Delaware or Georgia or one of them western countries so they tied my old man on to one end of it, and the other end on to something that was sure to hold."

This boy was pronounced a defective and sent to a place near Geneseo where epileptics can fall down and get up at their leisure.

"Don't think my dad was no spade," he said, reinserting his face between two pickets. "He was a Chinee. Lamp my eyes." He withdrew his face and put two slits in evidence and again was intent upon the football which much of the time was bounding unattached upon the hard ground.

"Yas, sir," he continued, making chewing tobacco of a suddenly discovered butt of cigar, "what's yellow in me is off the old man and the smoke is off the old woman. That song wasn't no pill dream, *The Wedding of the Chinee and the Coon.* I tell yuh they was there, kid." He whistled until the agent playfully cuffed him into silence.

This little bow-legged mongrel who was given to fits was declared defective. He became a horse jockey later and was a sensation at Tia Juana. The odds against his mounts were usually good because it was known that he might have a fit during the race, but he usually postponed his fits until the race was run. If the odds were bad, he was conveniently epileptic and fell numbly to the ground. In one fit that was sincere he was trampled to death in a large field of horses and he died in an ambulance, whistling *The Wedding of the Chinee and the Coon.*

CHAPTER XIII

A GLIMPSE OF SUZANNE

THIS little boy Curves has no real place in my story, but I am sure that he held his audiences when alive and perhaps the telling of him has held you. He coaxed and whipped the horses "home" at Tia Juana, which were better bred than he. Defective?

Nor is there a place in my story for Shep Friedl whom I met in Sing Sing Prison. He was a pickpocket of no social standing but he was very artful. He never "worked" in crowds. Said, "I didn't have to, and I was always afraid of catching something off 'em. Like the 'flu' or some of them germ things.

"I could make change for a bill in a guy's pocket, if I wanted to and he'd never know I was into him. But when those Benet testers shot them questions at me 'course I was after the best of it off of easy judges, so it took me a long while to add three to six and an hour to put the picture puzzle together.

"They asked me to spell my name. 'Course I'd been to school so I hands 'em not S-h-e-p, but the sounds, Shuh-ee-puh. Asked me what clothes I put on first when I dressed. So I says one shoe and one stocking, then my shirt and then my pants and then another stocking. Then I says, 'I'm all dressed.' I spoke slow with my eyes

heavy and kind of fishing around. They give my mind a mark of five years minus, and a tearful judge sends me home."

"How old were you?" I asked.

"Twenty-four," Shep answered, smiling with the curves down like a hyena in a picture.

The activity of Curves and the excitement of the football game had made the agent apprehensive and in consequence he said, "It is time to go home."

We walked slowly along the northerly side of the Park. I saw the policeman with the fallen arches but he didn't see me. We were turning into Lexington Avenue; walking fast with her father was the animated little cheer-leading girl in a blue sash. We also were walking fast. Curves was shaky on his feet and the agent had him by one hand on the curb side and steadied him on the other side, particularly at corners and when crossing the streets.

"Give yuh six bits for this, Sammy," said the little orphan, "whin I gits it, if I gits it, ef I knows where you is an' if I ain't got it spint afore I comes along up on top of you."

We were waiting to cross Twenty-second Street, and I was determined to speak to Suzanne and say good-by and to tell her, if I could, that I thought she was the nicest girl I had ever seen. Nicest or prettiest? There would be time to decide for she had fully a block to walk. Nicest girl? Or prettiest girl? Both. But which should I say first?

She and her father entered the Park at the western gate. I could see her running and leaping to the fray. From the reception accorded her, I thought that she must

have been away for a visit. I was right. Running far ahead of her father she waved her arms and screamed to her routed forces:

"Sick 'em—Lick 'em
For U-S Girls
Men are not mice, Sir,
Dear, dear, dear,
Men are much nice-er
Pull it up—dig it up
Way down here,
This is November
Time to remember
U-S Girls."

I strained my ears, for all of it was sweet music, that piping little treble from the hatless warrior, but Curves could wait no longer and fell writhing to one of the sidewalks of New York. A patrol wagon returning to the Station House, picked us up and carried us all home.

CHAPTER XIV

SOMEBODY TAKES ME

THAT night I went to bed early for Sunday brought many visitors looking to have sons.

Sic 'em—lick 'em—time to remember—Should I say prettiest or nicest—Suzanne—November—Fingers—I was soon asleep.

In the early afternoon, soon after we had eaten Sunday dinner, the agent drew me from a window where I was watching people pass.

"Do your best for this pair, Sammy," he said, "they are very rich. We look up these would-be parents. They got to show us. They are awful rich. Ponies and dogs and motor-cars and even private fish on their place. And they ain't asking for *some* one. They're asking for *you.*" He gave a final twist to my collar and brushed my hair back with his hand.

"When you are talking to them," he said, "always look at one of them right in the eye. Not at both of them at the same time. Your eye looks roving. Now get this for this is your chance. Your big chance. Don't cry. Or look as if you wanted to cry. People ain't looking to cheer up a child. They want you to make them cheerful. Now stand up straight. Don't stick your chin out so much, sonny." He surveyed me critically.

"Got any other clothes?"

"Yes, sir," I answered.

"Any not quite so good?"

"They are all nearly new," I said.

"Stolen? Do you know?"

"No, sir, I don't."

"Now there you go. Now you got to wipe your eyes up. Look ahead of you, sonny. The past is passed."

My handkerchief was rather small and was colored.

"That'll never do. Don't look right." He put my colored handkerchief in his pocket and mopped my eyes with a large white, tobaccoey affair of his own.

One of the boys who did errands pending "location" came in. For some reason I didn't like him. "*My* mother," he had often told me, "is dead. But yours *ain't*."

"A gent and his wife," he announced, "says they is waiting to see the kid whose mother was a moll."

"Did they say that? Say it like that?" I asked, fighting back a wave of tears.

"No," he said. "They asked for young Sammy Leaubeau. But there ain't two of them, is there?" He disappeared.

"Come," said the agent. We walked out and down the stairs into a reception room. My eyes were dry.

"You're doing good," said the agent.

I enjoyed the freedom of my hands, but that wasn't their way. The agent took one of them.

"Don't say, 'Lady, I like you,'" he advised. "Say to the man, 'I like your wife very much.' Then turn to her and say, 'I think your husband is a fine man,

too.' Then say, 'I want to be loved,' and don't open your mouth again except to answer questions. Tell 'em too that I treated you good and if you could see me again sometime—well, say you'd like to."

When we entered the reception room Mrs. Lanny Garrison rushed forward, leaving in the background a tall good-looking man who was slightly gray-haired. He was dressed to go to church but looked as if he never went there.

Mrs. Garrison was dressed in tennis clothes and looked as if she played well.

"Sammy Leaubeau!" She took both of my hands in hers. "Suzanne's little friend. I am *so* sorry for you, Sammy. *So* sorry."

"Thank you," I said, or think I said, but I know I asked, choking, "How is Suzanne?"

"Wonderful as ever. She has been away with her daddy and is just back." She looked at me long and carefully.

"I am afraid," she continued, "that if Suzanne were not back——" She stopped abruptly and whispered for a moment to Mr. Georgie Garrison and then returned to me. My heart was thumping wildly.

"Do you think you could like me, Sammy?" she asked.

"I do."

She laughed. "You mean," she asked, putting my head between her hands, "you do think that you like me or you do like me?"

I answered, "I do like you. I know it."

Mrs. Garrison kissed me, and "Georgie," as she called him, shook my hand.

Mrs. Garrison continued, "I don't expect you to love me as you do your poor dear little mother."

I wondered what she knew of my mother and how she knew, but she looked to me like a woman who knew everything.

"Oh, yes, he will," the agent said.

"I never will," I asserted.

"I'd never let you," said Lanny, freezing the agent with a look.

"In time he will," was the agent's retort.

"I'll like you a lot, Mrs. Garrison, I know that." I spoke honestly, and perhaps a little tearfully. "But my own mother will always, always be first."

"We all know," said the agent, "that time does a great deal for all of us."

"Didn't do much for us, did it, Lanny?" said Georgie, close to her ear.

"How do you vote, Georgie? We'll take him, *won't* we?" She spoke teasingly.

"I vote yes. Of course I vote yes. Subject, of course, to the general's approval. We can't starve and she——"

"Of course you both know," the agent broke in very officially, "this lad was born——"

"We know what you know, Oscar. We will take Sammy for four months. Then adopt or return. Sammy, get your hat and your things. You and I have got a date with two big trout in a black pool up in a wonderful country. They think they're so smart! Those two trout."

"There will be preliminaries," said the agent. "In court perhaps, and this is Sunday."

"Tell Peter Gerry that the Garrisons have Sammy Leaubeau."

"Will he say O. K.?" asked the agent.

"No. He'll say, 'Bully for that crazy Lanny Garrison.' Hurry up. Get packed. No, we'll send for his clothes. It's coolish out and I don't want Suzanne too long in the car."

To the boys I said a hurried "good-by," and with Curves I shook hands.

"Nothin' but sevens and elevens, Jasbo," he said. "Good luck."

Perked up on the back seat of a magnificent motor-car was little Suzanne. She was bareheaded and wore a scarlet sweater.

"You sit by me, Sammy Leaubeau," she said. "I'm only going a few blocks, and then we'll have to say good-by."

I was at her side, and with Mrs. Garrison driving we were soon in motion. Suzanne's little finger played with mine. Or at least we touched. I couldn't speak.

"I'm going out west with daddy to-morrow," Suzanne said.

"Far west?"

"A town called Moorhead in Minnesota. To start a mission church. Aren't you sorry, Sammy?" she asked, this time boldly seizing my embarrassed fingers.

"Of course I am," I replied, "and I hope you'll be back soon."

"Never can tell," she said maturely. "Don't forget me." The car slowed in front of a white brick house which I have since learned was the Brevoort House in lower Fifth Avenue.

Suzanne's father came down on the walk and talked for a moment with the Garrisons. Standing on the running-board he kissed Lanny, then shook hands with Georgie. To me he said, "God bless you, laddie." Then I told Suzanne that I wouldn't forget.

The car was snorting and we were off. Suzanne waved from the walk and I waved standing in the car.

CHAPTER XV

HEAVEN DE LUXE

GEORGIE helped me into the front seat, taking my place in the rear seat. Mrs. Garrison drove swishingly and I sat near her, with a high cold wind rumpling my hair and completely undoing the work of the agent's steam-roller hand.

"Not so fast," said Georgie.

"He says not so fast," Mrs. Garrison whispered in my ear, "and I say not so slow, but we love each other dearly."

We covered some miles.

"I think, Sammy, you are going to fit in. Just nice. Like a bug."

We were speeding over the long smooth asphalt in Pelham Parkway. There was a little shower.

"This won't last long," Mrs. Garrison said, "and then those foxy trout will come to the surface to see what it's all about."

"I hope so," I said.

"Georgie is asleep," Mrs. Garrison whispered. "Great fellow, Georgie," she continued, as she slipped around a fast moving car.

"We read about you, of course, and saw your pretty mother's picture. It was Georgie who was strong for

the scheme, and then I fell in. 'Course Georgie's mother has got all the money, but she is in Europe and we couldn't very well chew it over by cable and we were afraid to wait. 'Fraid some one else would get you."

Now we *were* going. Long straight road and no one ahead.

"Everybody eating. Our lunch is waiting. What do you like to eat?"

"Everything," I answered, with strict regard for the truth.

The wet pavement held Mrs. Garrison's attention for the road was all curves.

"You talk, Sammy," she said, "and call me Lanny. My name was Lanson before I was snared."

"What does your husband do?" I asked by way of a start.

"What does he do? Let me see. He sleeps and eats, of course. Gets lit-up a little. He's awfully sweet to me. Goes to his broker's office to ask how things are. Has a lot of little charities. He breeds dogs and in the fall does a little shooting. Is a great expert on melons and on larkspur. Those are the principal things he does. Of course he has lots of other things."

"I kind of supposed," I said, "that you would ask me a lot of questions——" Then added, "Lanny," suddenly.

Lanny let one elbow rest on my hip.

"If I had three hands, or it had stopped raining," she said, "I'd squeeze you. But on Sunday we fear our servants and we have got to move."

We shot between two stone posts and by a little brick house.

"We're on our place now. I mean on Georgie's mother's place, but a long way from the house and all curves. Trout." She nodded with her head toward a brook so far under us we could barely hear it, but in my heart I became an old, old fisherman. Gentle I'd be with those trout but firm.

"Just one question, Sammy, and only one. Do you know who your father was?" Lanny asked.

"No, I don't. But my mother does. For sure——"

"That's our house on the hill, that long low smear of red and white," she interrupted.

"Mother won't tell me, 'cause she thinks I'd grow up and kill him. And then they'd kill me for killing him, and my mother wants me for support and for company in her old age."

"At this turn," Lanny said, "Georgie always wakes up. Just watch him."

I turned to look. Mr. Garrison was yawning.

"Well, Lobo, old socks," he said, "you think the house needs painting or what do you think? Are you a one-chop or a two-chop eater?" The car stopped.

"This is it, Sammy, and you are welcome," said Lanny. She rumpled my hair and hugged me tight. I *think* that I hugged her back.

With a "Late again, helloa!" Mrs. Garrison greeted a squad of servants and their commanding officer. The servants grinned and neither bent their backs nor even dropped their chins. Screen-wise it is different, and a film butler or footman seems always to take the master's hat and stick but Mr. Garrison put his stick on one table and threw his hat on another. Many hats and many sticks.

"One minute for hands and hair-brushing, Sammy," said Mrs. Garrison.

"Do you want my hair slicked down?" I asked, observing that Mr. Garrison's hair was very flat and smooth, also scarce.

"Just as you like, Sammy. Hair is some of our most personal property. In here you go," and she pushed me through a door while Mr. Garrison went into an opposite door, stripping his coat as he went. Again he was below proper film standards.

My little wash-room was so white and so marbly that even the faucets seemed unused. Such a gush of water and the hot came hot without waiting.

At table the servants stood very stiff and far removed. Mrs. Garrison sat down with her hat on but presently, and for no reason, asked Donaldson to take it off and give it away. "Just don't like it," she said. "Want to get it off my mind." Donaldson carried it out by a little tail, much as he would have carried out an animal not quite dead and possessed of one potential bite.

"My, but you are a shiny little boy," Mrs. Garrison said. "Georgie, you'll have to buck up. You've got a rival all right."

"My first," said Georgie.

"That you know about," said Lanny, but she looked at him as my own mother looked at me, with a rip slashing look which said, "You are the one for me. My first, second and third choice and there isn't any other." Georgie looked back at her with an air of proprietorship but not complete. As one might look at an automobile upon which he had made but one payment. "Fine, wonderful, *but* can I keep it?"

The servants called me Mr. Sammy. I hardly thought it to be right and was glad when they called me Sammy which they soon did when larking about on the green spaces between the house and the garage. In the house it continued Mr. Sammy, but an accompanying twitch of an eyelash removed the injustice.

It was nearly dark when Mrs. Garrison and I left the trout pool.

"Too cagey, those old birds," said Mrs. Garrison as we started to scramble down the hillside. The fishing tackle we left under a rock ledge, and a little book of flies we placed in the hollow of a dead tree.

"I know a woman," Mrs. Garrison said slowly, "excuse me, a lady who would like a whole lot to be here, Sammy, and some day perhaps she will."

We had reached the roadway and Mrs. Garrison, with her fingers in her wide mouth, whistled for a car to come and fetch us home. After waiting a moment she whistled again.

"That means order cancelled. We'll go cross cuts through the woods. Get you acquainted."

We plunged into a path which twisted its way into leafy darkness. The path was wide for two and "Lanny" took my hand.

"What do you say about the lady?" she asked.

"Do you mean my mother?" I inquired.

"You bet I do. Fingers Leaubeau is the girl what I am conversing about. To-morrow I'll go to town and get your things, all of them. To-night you'll have to sleep in your dear little shirt-tail. The only earthly reason for being a man is to have shirt-tails. You see, Sammy, we would adopt you to-morrow only Georgie

and I haven't a nickel. His mother has got it all. Who's going to take care of Sammy if Georgie and Lanny are dumped? It's all up to the old girl. Mrs. James Everett Lollipop Garrison."

"Lollipop was a word of my mother's," I said.

"I was rather certain she was that way, Sammy, from what I read of her. How she did throw it into that old bunk artist who pulled all the Juke stuff. It was just too rich. We'll have to go single file now, me first. Stoop down. There's one place, little shirt-tails, that you'll have to crawl on your belly. Here it is, down you go. Grab on to one of my ankles. Isn't this the darkness though! I love it." We wriggled on the ground and soon I could see the lights in the house.

"Pipe Georgie's shadow," Mrs. Garrison said. "The old dear is going to shave. Early start this morning too much for him. Here we are. Knock the leaves off me and I'll do the same for you."

In the morning I was late in opening my eyes and I lay on the bed smelling the country smells and listening to the birds fighting.

I slipped on my trousers and went into the hall to look about and see. I saw Donaldson.

"You are to have breakfast and lunch," he said, "in one, Mr. Sammy. Mr. Garrison is in town, sir, and so is Mrs. Garrison, and after you've eaten, sir, Mrs. Garrison says you're to lollipop around outdoors and not to get lost, sir, without leaving us word where you can be found, sir. Eggs, milk and two pieces of sausage, I'm going to order for you, sir. The swimming pool is—I'll show you, sir. There are vines and all that, sir, and all you need is a towel."

In the pool, which was back of where line upon line of clean clothes were being blown dry by the wind, I swam around the four sides and took two dives. Could these things be true? Yes. Eggs, milk in a pitcher and two pieces of sausage, there they were. And some day would come my mother and I would be more at home then. "Donaldson," I would say, "marmalade and toast. Serve the marmalade in the sunshine."

"What's the matter, Mr. Sammy? You mustn't cry, sir." Donaldson lifted my head. "You're full of good food, sir, and you are with the finest people, sir, on this side of the water. Come down with me to where we got the goats, sir, and see them a while. They're a couple of vaudeville goats what Cruelty to Animals copped out of a show and what Mrs. Garrison copped away from the Cruelty Society, and if I can I'll start a couple of them butting each other for you."

The goats wouldn't butt and they weren't very funny so I went by myself into the library where I read or looked at book-backs until I heard the buzz of a motor and Mrs. Garrison's shrill whistle which she made with her fingers.

She had brought all of my clothes and together we put them in closets and drawers.

With Georgie she went out to dinner. I ate alone, then read in a book and then sat with the servants in the laundry yard. Before very long I went to bed.

When I wakened the next morning the carpet, near the windows, was black with rain. I walked around the wet spots and closed the windows, and went back to bed.

Asleep or awake I don't know, but I can remember

Mrs. Garrison standing in the open door. She was dressed for rainy weather and I think she was crying. Many things were happening of which I knew nothing. Nothing then.

My mother stood near the window where, until I had closed it, the rain had driven hard. Her hair was wet. She was twitching her face to keep it young. With one hand she pointed to me and with another to Mrs. Garrison, standing in the door. I turned from the little girl at the window to ask Mrs. Garrison to let me go. She was no longer there. My mother too had fled through the window. Like a deer, for all her prison gray clothes, flannel and heavy with rain.

Near my bed stood Donaldson. "You are to dress, Mr. Sammy, at once. Your breakfast will be served in your room."

"Where is Mrs. Garrison?" I asked, my mind still hazy and my eyelids falling.

"In town, sir, by early train. And you are to follow on the ten twenty-nine. Orders by telephone."

"And what do I do then?"

"You'll be met, sir."

"Who?"

"I don't know, sir. Your things are to go with you. One of the maids will pack."

"My things! I don't understand."

"Nor me, sir, but the Gorgon cabled and I am personally packing Mr. Garrison, and Mrs. Garrison's maid is doing her. They are both sailing. You can bathe, sir, while the breakfast is up."

CHAPTER XVI

I BECOME SAMUEL BURROWS

THROUGH the rain we drove, me and my things, out of my dream, to the White Plains station. We passed by the brook, roaring loud, and I thought of the two cagey trout; wise old birds, in the black pool below the road.

Where was I going? And who would meet me? Lanny, of course. But would she?

It wasn't Lanny. I didn't see her until morning, just before she sailed. She came to the society's rooms. She said I would get a letter and that she hated herself and she was like all the Lansons; just "rotten, no good, with their backs to the music."

Georgie was there too, looking, I thought, very sad. "Curves" was peeking through the door, and the agent was waiting outside, as requested.

Georgie slapped me on the back and Lanny cried a little. I remember saying, as if I had learned it in a book, (but I hadn't), "Don't be a mouse, Lanny. Be a woman."

"Mouse" sounded not the way a boy like me should talk to Mrs. Garrison. Then I said—"Don't be a little mouse."

She was gone and Georgie followed her. I waved my

hand at the big car making the corner slowly with a deck piled high with luggage. The trout were safe and I was to be adopted by correspondence.

Lanny's letter, when it came, explained away some of my troubles. I could put the letter in here, or I can hold it so that you shall read it when I did and where I did.

We walked many times by Gramercy Square. Tom told me through the fence that the minister and his daughter had moved away. "We all miss her," he said.

"I do too," I replied, and Tom laughed in a way that I wasn't sure of.

I learned that Mr. and Mrs. Garrison had wanted to leave some money for me but their request was refused. My gratitude should be entirely to those who were willing to give me their name and their protection. That was the judgment of those in charge, and Mr. and Mrs. Garrison—Georgie and Lanny—had yielded and had sailed.

The newspapers too had taken the position that, while I was entitled to my chance, my birth in a cell should not on account of maudlin sympathy entitle me to advantages not available to those who were really better born and whose lineage was legal and far, far more deserving from any proper point of view. A picture of me swimming in a marble pool was set opposite to that of a real orphan cooling his face in the drip from a city hydrant.

My turn came at last. I had been adopted, and one Saturday morning I was taken to the Grand Central Station and introduced to the conductor of a train that was going to Chicago. A heavy paper ribbon was placed

around my arm so that anybody who read it would know that I was being forwarded to Mr. and Mrs. John Burrows, Glyndon, Clay County, Minnesota.

I knew that I had to change cars at Chicago and again at St. Paul. I knew that I was to eat nine times on my journey. Nine meals were furnished me in nine separate paper boxes. On every box was printed, "Monday Breakfast" or "Tuesday Dinner," as the case might have been. I had no watch. It had been "lost" in the society rooms in New York, but I had never reported "the loss" for fear I would find that Curves had "found" it, but I was told if I got hungry to ask somebody what time it was and when it was eight, twelve or six, to eat out of the right box. I did the best I could but I was hungry more times than there were boxes, and from St. Paul to Glyndon I sometimes asked what time it was too often but only out of curiosity. The last empty box had been pitched out of the window somewhere between Chicago and St. Paul.

I arrived at the little frame station at the Northern Pacific Railroad in Glyndon late on a cold afternoon. A mail bag had been thrown on the platform. Near it stood my trunk. The station was closed but a hurrying man walking on a side-track looked as if he might be the station agent. He was. I asked him if he knew where Mr. and Mrs. John Burrows lived.

"Nobody of that name in this town," he said, gathering up the mail bag. "There might be farmers around of that name. Try the post-office."

He opened and closed the door of the little station, and again I was left alone. The town was one church, two grain elevators, a store, a two-story frame school-

house and perhaps three hundred living houses, making a short village street out of a grayish brown prairie road, stretching from one horizon straight and uninviting to the other.

A fast dropping red sun lashed the roofs of the buildings with fiery color and one side of one tall elevator looked as if it were on fire.

I walked down the platform toward the elevator. If I went to the post-office I was afraid somebody might take my trunk. So I decided, for a few moments at least, to sit on my trunk and wait.

A rumble as of thunder made me turn my head and down a road, running perpendicular to the town, I saw a pair of heavy bay horses and behind them as though riding in a chariot, was a tall person wearing a man's hat. One hand plied the whip upon the steaming horses and the other hand was raised with a friendly wave. It was the friendly wave which made me think that the driver was a woman. I was right. It was my mother coming to meet me.

Drawing close to the platform she climbed down from the high wagon box and with the short step of a woman in the boots of a man, walked rapidly toward me. To myself I said "Good-looking once," and I think I put her down for thirty. She was thirty-two.

She kissed me and said, "Thank God." She looked rather strangely at my city clothes and particularly at a broad white collar turning over on the collar of my coat. She seized one end of the trunk and with a look invited me to the other end. We lifted the trunk and with her end much higher, we carried it to the wagon; a lumber wagon with the name of the maker painted

with faded letters on the side. Two buffalo robes had been thrown over the horses' backs and when removed showed broad spots dark with steam.

"Will you get in?" Mrs. Burrows asked in a high-pitched voice.

I answered by climbing over the wheel and into the wagon. There were no steps.

Mrs. Burrows put her foot on the front wheel and took a walking jump which landed at my side on the platform of the wagon. She spread her feet a yard apart and yelled to the horses, "Go 'long." Her voice was rough and hoarse, but not as if it had always been rough and hoarse.

The road was hard and bumpy with wagon ruts frozen in clay. The horses trotted as soon as they crossed the Great Northern Railroad tracks. They set to the setting sun and broke into a gallop. The rumbling wagon began to roar and tremble and lest I lose my balance I spread my feet as far apart as I could and for further support clutched a handful of Mrs. Burrows' skirt. She looked down at me and patted my hand affectionately and yearningly with her free hand. I kept changing the position of my feet to avoid falling or being thrown out of the wagon. The woman's body swayed in a semicircular fashion; shoulders, head and hips. Only her feet were still. I was as much fascinated with the man's shoes on her feet as she was with the white collar on my neck.

The road became a bit smoother, the horses stretched their heads and lowered their backs. I had never before been behind a pair of horses. I liked it and I liked the woman who was driving. She was driving against time.

Whether darkness or against something that she had left cooking on the stove I didn't know.

The ball of fire in the sky dropped quickly below the frozen prairie. There was no moon and no stars. Shouts from other drivers and rumbles from other wagons came rolling across the prairie. Fearing for my balance I dropped on the floor of the wagon. The road became rougher and rougher. Mrs. Burrows was silent, but the echoes of Scandinavian profanity and the rolling of beer kegs in other wagons made me far from lonely.

Farmers in the fall, with not much to do on a farm, all left the town together. All of them bold and all of them, like Tam O'Shanter, afraid. They were driving instead of riding. And like Tam O'Shanter they were afraid of witches, not pursuing them from behind but waiting for them near kitchen stoves. And lurching and rolling on top of a buffalo robe with most of its hair off, and clutching to the side of the wagon was little Sammy Leaubeau lately of Gramercy Square, Great Jones Street and Avenue C.

The wagon suddenly left the road and the horses dashed across the frozen pasture land. The ground was smooth. Noises subsided and the tall woman, the reins in the hook of her elbow, cuddled up on a horse blanket and sat beside me; one hand on my shoulder and her cheek resting against mine. She was doing her best, but it was as if a tin pan was wishing itself to be a sofa pillow. Character, however, can always make friends. I didn't like her, but I can't say that I hated her. I could never hate any woman. It was character sitting behind me and taking me to her home, but I was thinking of a little woman not exactly identified with character but sitting

on the edge of a bunk in a prison cell, twitching her face to keep it young. I found a long hairy place on the buffalo robe and in it muffled my sobs. The dam which had held my tears gave way. My hands were cold and I rubbed them.

"Put them in mine," Mrs. Burrows said.

I did and they grew colder.

"Do you know your new name?" asked the childless woman of thirty-two.

I answered, "Samuel Leaubeau." But in the answer was a note of inquiry.

"Your name," she said, "by law is Samuel Burrows. I'll spell it for you." She did so. "Spell it after me, will you?" she asked.

"I can't spell," I answered, "much," I added hastily.

"Read better than you can spell," she muttered, more to herself than to me. "I," she continued,—"perhaps you can't spell anything, but I can't read much—at least I don't. Perhaps you can read aloud to me. Did you bring any books with you?"

"My trunk," I answered, "is one-half books and one-half clothes."

"Yes, Samuel," she continued, "you must read to me aloud. Burrows will like that too. He doesn't read much. I guess that him and me spent too much time on our spelling books. Did you study spelling books much?"

"No," I said, "Cinderella, Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver,—oh, a whole lot of interesting people taught me to spell."

Mrs. Burrows chewed one corner of her lower lip as if wondering whether she had ever known these interesting people. Then she asked, "Was Cinderella a fairy?"

"I'll read to you about her first of all," I replied.

She released her lip and seemed about to speak.

The horses again struck a road and ran like the wind. Again tremble, tremble. The driver stood up and shouted. Ahead in the dark was a restless lantern. The horses, suddenly swerving, dragged the wagon over a ditch and stopped. I could smell the steam from their bodies and hear their heavy breathing. I liked it then and I like to think about it now.

"We're here," said the woman. "Samuel Burrows, you are home."

CHAPTER XVII

GETTING ACQUAINTED

"HOW does he look?" asked a voice in the dark from above the lantern. The lantern was flashed in my face and the voice added, "Martha Burrows, we own a dude." The lantern was lowered and the voice continued, as Mrs. Burrows unhitched the horses. "Sammy, we will be good to you. We got every kind of live stock in this farm except the kind we wanted. Come on in the house. Just follow the lantern."

I followed, carrying the bag and the box. Mrs. Burrows continued around the horses, working in the dark. We kept walking. Mr. Burrows carried a pail of milk, steaming with more than ninety-eight degrees of heat from the cow. I hated the smell. I did then and I do now. We entered the house and Mrs. Burrows, striding from nowhere, was close behind. She raised the wick of a good-sized oil lamp. Put a handle on a heavy glass bowl and a glass chimney on top of that and you have that lamp. If I could write poetry, I would address an ode to it. The warmest, finest thing on the Minnesota prairies is the oil lamp. You dress, undress and read by it. The lamp is Home. Behind a calico curtain hung on a string, was a corner of the kitchen that was my bedroom. The furnishings were a slippery feather bed,

supported by the floor, and two clothes hooks. Off the kitchen was the bedroom of Mr. and Mrs. Burrows.

"I'll get your trunk, Samuel," Mr. Burrows said. He walked around me several times looking at me critically, and I was afraid of disapproval. He was a very powerful man. Stronger than I am now. As he went out the door he wiped his eyes with his sleeve, and I thought I heard a gurgle in his throat.

Mrs. Burrows busied herself about the kitchen and I sat down and looked around. There were a few wooden chairs and a pine table. There was a piece of oil cloth under the table over the curling edge of which I was to trip more than a thousand times. Several calendars hung on one of the walls and pages had been torn from magazines and pinned upon the wall which was farthest from the kitchen stove. There were pictures of men. Thomas Edison was one, Henry Ford was another. There was the poet Longfellow and Burbank, the breeder of flowers and vegetables.

Mr. Burrows came in carrying my trunk by the strap just as a woman carries a bag. He carried it into another room and returning took a seat at the table. I wondered whether it was the foot of the table or the head of the table. When I lived in Gramercy Park I occasionally had lunch with some of the rich people in that neighborhood, and I had noticed that there was a head of every table whether occupied or not. The extra size of the chair, or a pair of arms, or a higher back proclaimed the dignity of the place. At this table all chairs were alike. I always sat on the side which faced the window but Mr. and Mrs. Burrows used both ends of the table interchangeably.

The food was put on the table at once. A dish of salt

pork, a kettle of boiled potatoes and a dish of very thick hot gravy. With a hot stove behind my back and the hot gravy in my stomach I had a very comfortable feeling. I thought that I ought to say something and I wanted to talk but I could quickly see that this was not a talking house, or at least that talking and eating were not combined. Mr. Burrows, I thought, looked like a man who used to talk and would like to talk if he felt that it was the proper thing to do.

I had a very large help of salt pork and was not over fond of it. As soon as I had finished a potato Mr. Burrows would fork one out of the kettle and bear it down across my plate until the fork was loosened.

"After this first meal," he said, "you can help yourself. We have this same meal three times a day and if I was you I'd eat more pork and less potato."

"They cost just the same," Mrs. Burrows said, "and Joe don't mean it in a saving way. Just for our son's good."

I separated a few shreds of salt pork, the lean from the fat, and swallowed them between large swallows of potato, making a kind of temporary sandwich in my throat.

Against the uncurtained window came a pelting which I thought was rain, and said cheerfully, "It seems to be raining."

"Snow," said Mr. Burrows, with Vermont-like decision.

"Sleet," said Mrs. Burrows, "perhaps."

"Same thing," said her husband, loosening another potato upon my plate and covering it with a ladleful of gravy.

"Eat up, my lad," he said, "a man can't work unless he eats, and it's the same for a boy as a man."

He pushed back his chair, lit the lantern and went out. Mrs. Burrows left the table carrying with her the dishes which she put in a large pan and into this pan poured some hot water and began to agitate the dishes. I sat near the stove in front of the oven.

Mrs. Burrows, with her back turned, said, "You are my son. Do you object if I kiss you?" She went on washing dishes and waited for my answer.

My disposition was to say "Yes," but I reflected that they were giving me a home and there was little if anything that I could do for them.

"Did you hear me?" Mrs. Burrows asked, turning.

"Did you mean kiss publicly or kiss privately?" I asked her.

"There isn't any publicly out here," she replied. "When the snow begins we are in for the winter and except for Sunday you don't see a soul. Once a day, at night before you go to bed, then, Sammy, I think that I would like to kiss you." She looked at me and added timidly, "If you don't think you'd mind."

"That's all right," I said, "before I go to bed." I immediately and ungratefully wondered how long I could sit up.

Mrs. Burrows put some more water on the stove and some more wood upon the fire, talking as she worked.

"When we decided that we wanted to bring a child out from the East and adopt it I wanted to get a little girl, but Joe wanted a boy. He said that the farm needed an extra hand outside and that the house didn't. Burrows always thought more of the barn and what was in it than

he did of me." She said this regretfully but not angrily. And then continued, "Burrows said he don't want to feed any animal that can't work, except colts and calves, and to them he claims that food is more a loan than a gift."

The outside door opened, and, preceded by a little flurry of snow, Mr. Burrows came in, put out the lantern and hung it on a hook and then washed his face and hands with a dipper of cold water and a cake of soap. He was the only person I ever knew who really liked soap in his eyes. His entire face being well lathered, he would heap the soap up toward his eyes and rub it in with his knuckles. He removed the soap by throwing a dipperful of water in his face and dried himself with a corner of his wife's apron.

He felt my muscles, both arms and legs, and rubbed his knuckles up and down my backbone. "A little soft in spots," he said, "but you are all right, my lad, you are all right. You got plenty of bone. Soon as mother can cut down some of my clothes for you ——"

At the word mother, Mrs. Burrows began to cry. I said good night, kissed Mrs. Burrows and went behind the curtain. I undressed, took my pajamas from my bag and was about to put them on. Holding them in my hand I looked at the feather bed and then at the pajamas. The bed and the pajamas didn't go together, that was all there was to it. I threw them on top of my trunk and got into bed. I was in what Mrs. Garrison called my shirt-tail. It was also a common expression around Moorhead and one that I never quite understood. I wore my whole shirt and why any special reference should be made to the tail I can't understand. The bed kept giving like water under a boat until finally I sank into a hollow

which promised permanence. I could hear Mr. and Mrs. Burrows talking in low tones and occasionally I heard a sob, but whether it was his or hers or both, I couldn't tell. While wondering I must have gone to sleep.

In the morning by lamplight we ate salt pork, potatoes and gravy, and they drank black coffee. After breakfast I went outdoors and looked around. The sun was just rising. The house was banked on all sides as high as the window-sills with straw and horse manure. The house didn't seem big enough viewed from the outside to contain all of the things that I knew were on the inside.

The barn was big, very big, and I went in to it as a child would enter the Zoo in Central Park. I found six horses, two cows, twenty half-frozen chickens and a dozen fussy and disgruntled pigeons warming their feet on the backs of half as many hogs. They seemed to be a peaceful community making common cause against the weather. The breaths of the horses, cows and hogs filled the air with little clouds, and the pigeons looked as if they were exhaling little columns of cigarette smoke through their double-barreled noses. All of these animals I knew that I would like. I patted all of them except the hogs and mentally gave them names from books I had read. The horses had names already.

Mr. Burrows showed me where the beets and carrots were and showed me how to chop them. That was to be one of my daily jobs. They were to be fed to the cows, he said, and if one piece was too large, he added forcefully, it would stick "crossways" in her throat and the "critter" would die unless some one was around with a stove poker or a long stick. Thus was I introduced to the responsibilities of farm life. He took me up in the

hayloft and, placing a fork in my hands, tried to find out about how large a forkful of hay I could handle. I surprised him both by my ability to lift and by the distance which I could pitch the hay. He thumped me on the back and told me that I was good. I was tremendously pleased. How many times during that winter I wished that I hadn't lifted so much hay or forked it so high. Mr. Burrows expected a boy at least to equal his record on every succeeding day.

He took me to the pump which was half-way from the house and the barn, but not in a direct line. He asked me if I had ever worked a pump and was surprised and disgusted when I said I had never seen one. He seized the handle to show me how to operate the pump. Something below was frozen and the only result he got was a protesting gasp from the lower end of the pipe. We went to the house and got a bucket of hot water and then another and another. By much pouring on my part and much pumping on his we finally got the pump to working. At eleven o'clock we were called for dinner; salt pork, boiled potatoes, thick gravy and tea with tea leaves floating on the top.

CHAPTER XVIII

JOSEPH BURROWS

AFTER dinner I unpacked my trunk and put my clothes in neat piles upon the floor. Mrs. Burrows watched me, occasionally picking up a garment and rubbing it across her cheek.

"I used to wear pretty things once," she said. "Did your mother wear pretty clothes?"

I burst into tears. She put her arm around my shoulders, but in a fit of hysterics I fear I pushed her away. My tears started in grief but were continued in rage. She closed the door and I threw myself on top of the feather bed. Up to this time I had not realized that I had been pulled up by the roots and that I could never take root again. The world seemed a chaos and nothing in it right except my mother. Even to think of her would bring me joy, but this was followed with the thought of where she was and I tried in vain to banish her from my mind. I went to sleep.

Along about dark Mr. Burrows opened the door and said that supper was ready. I sat at the table but had no appetite. I rose from my chair. "I am sorry," I said, "that I feel this way because I know that I ought to be different. If you will excuse me and let me go to bed I promise you that after this I will be very different."

They looked at each other and nodded yes. I kissed Mrs. Burrows on the mouth. Mr. Burrows looked so moanful that I went around to his chair, and he kissed me on the forehead. I went to my room and again in tears I went to bed. The wind was howling and banging against the windows, but as soon as I had made a warm spot for my feet I went to sleep.

In the morning the snow was more than four feet deep everywhere. There were no drifts because there was nothing for the snow to drift on. There were no trees on the farm, or near it, or in sight of it, but the wind moaned and howled and blew desperately against the windows. Up to that moment I had always thought that trees, like a palm-leaf fan, produced the wind. I had been so certain of it that I had never even asked. Slow mental processes now told me that air was not moved by the trees but the trees were moved by air.

Right after breakfast Mr. Burrows and I went to the barn. The sun had not yet risen. He carried the milk pails and I carried a lantern. Fine particles of snow drove down upon my eyelids and it was hard to see. The snow came far over my knees and I had many falls before we got to the barn. To regain my feet and at the same time hold the lantern aloft was a job of practical acrobatics for which I was not fully equipped. As soon as the milking was done and the animals fed we returned to the house. Mrs. Burrows put the milk away in pans while my father and I took turns at the hot-water basin and soap. The water was changed and with four hands in the basin at the same time we seized the slippery soap in turn. I was trying to be cheerful and by way of showing it squeezed his hands under the water. There were

squeezes and counter-squeezes. I liked this man, my father, and I liked him well.

Day followed day and the nights came in between. I was becoming acquainted with my father and he with me. My mother it was harder to know or, perhaps, because she was my mother, I didn't try to know her. She was my second mother but my father was the first.

One morning after a snow of unusual depth father and I were digging a path to the barn. The snow was as high as my head. First we dug a path about the width of a man moving sidewise and then widened it to the width of a man marching head on with a milk pail in each hand. It was frightfully cold. A bleary sun shot out a few feeble, exploring rays, found nothing to look at and immediately retired behind a convenient cloud.

"Are you cold, sonny?" my father asked, bringing his shovel to the ground.

"I'm all right while I'm shoveling, but my arms kinda ache and I don't shovel fast enough."

"Come into the barn, I want to talk to you," my father said, and he led the way. "If you get cold in there you can lean yourself on to a cow," he added as we walked. "Funny thing, horses pull in the heat and cows give it out. You stoke a good, honest cow with bran and she's the nearest to a radiator as you'll see on a farm. Hogs is cold in the winter and hot in the summer. Cows is hot in January and cool in June."

We were now in the barn. Hay munching and pigeon coos were not sounds to interfere much. We placed ourselves on opposite sides of a red and white radiator and Mr. Burrows began to talk to me as if he had said the same things a great number of times to himself. He

seemed to invite my attention but did not expect me to share in the conversation until notified to do so.

"We had three, my wife and me did. Two of them born to one time. Two boys were seven and the girl was five when scarlet fever took all of them to once. When the snow is off I'll show you where we have got them. No doctor could make the roads that winter and it was just a case of hoping and trying and trying and hoping. They didn't last long and there was one digging for all of them in the frozen ground. Afore the children went we were right cheerful, my wife and me, but in the next few years we got to moping, just plain moping the way you see us now. I used to be a fellow with a lot of life in me and Martha, well, she was different enough so that I wanted to marry her and I was glad to get her, but after the children went she was different. Summer-times I'd find her sitting there peeling potatoes with her chair and pan near the grave and for her own sake I'd give her hell. Two or three years went by and no more children came and I paid a doc five dollars to say for certain, well, you might say that I gave him five dollars for forecasting the future. There would be no more children he said, but I had teamed up with my wife for life and I'm not the kind of fellow that quits. Then I got to moping. Winter-times with nothing else to do I'd shovel the snow off the grave and go moaning the whole winter. That didn't do her any good. Out on these big prairies some go summer crazy and some go winter crazy. There is a whole lot of people in the insane asylum in St. Peter in one season and another season they are out working just like ordinary folks but when their crazy season comes back they go again. When the weather breaks up we'll

be a getting a few back from the asylum and when they come I'll show them to you Saturdays when we drive into Moorhead.

"One day Martha and me, who was each more or less suspecting the other of going crazy, got to reading in a paper about people out West adopting New York children, and at the first reading we was both keen about the idea. Martha was for a girl and me for a boy. She's changed her mind though now and Martha is for a boy herself." He shut one eye, the open one twinkling merrily for both.

"Let's move to another cow," I said. "It seems to be fairer."

"Sure," he replied, "but you want to remember this, sonny, you and me are giving out some heat ourselves. You take three lots a day of pork, potatoes and gravy, and we do a little steaming off on our own account." On the head of the newly visited cow Mr. Burrows gave a gentle cuff and with a mildly reproachful look the cow returned to her hay.

"I wrote to the Children's Society down to New York," my father continued, "and furnished references from our church down in Vermont, 'cause we had never brought our church letters West, kept puttin' off and puttin' off and puttin' off. Then our children went and while we never denied God, neither Martha nor me was so keen to look up His house of worship on Sunday.

"We asked the society so soon as they got a chance to send us a healthy boy from eight to twelve years old and to pick out the one who had been in the hardest luck. I wanted the boy to think that the life out here, whatever it was, was softer than he had ever had it before. The

harder the luck the better, I wrote them, only we wanted a whole boy. That we were in no position and had no wishes to wheel-chair a cripple around the farm. I said if they could guarantee the boy was cheerful we would take him on their word. To send us the kind of papers we ought to have and we would do the adopting or the probating or whatever was necessary, in our county courthouse at Moorhead and as soon as we got the papers signed up we'd let them know and they could ship our son upon demand.

"There was much writing and some photographs. Nothing came of it. But the idea always stayed. We didn't have much to offer and I reckon the society was placing children to better advantages. I reckon you and I is thawed out enough to cut up a few cow beets."

Mr. Burrows' voice was trembling and his eyes were shining. With big knives, sitting on milk stools we hacked away at warty frozen beets. I was thinking of Moorhead and Suzanne and I was quite content with the moments' silence that followed.

"Well," Mr. Burrows began afresh, "there came to Moorhead a man from New York aiming to start a mission church. Episcopal, and the wonders of his preaching spread. He was working in little towns clean from St. Paul to Butte, and Martha and me went in to hear him. Sammy, he was grand. 'Dude' some called him at first and he wore clothes that Martha and me weren't used to. But when he starts off 'my friends,' I tell you we was warm; warm all over—your backbone shivering nice.

"He was hopping in and out of town and back to New York, but after hearing him quite a few times Martha and me got to know him, and so one day we up

and said to him, 'Mr. Stuart, when next you're down to New York pick us out a boy, and we'll adopt him and bring him up as good as we can.' And, Sammy, you are the boy he sent. We went to probate court and signed the papers afore you'd even got here. That's what we think of the Reverend George Stuart."

"How far is Moorhead from here?" I asked.

"Ten mile from the next section line."

"Is Mr. Stuart there now?"

"He was here last Sunday, but Moorhead ain't ready yet even for a mission church and he went out to Butte to preach to miners. But he did say if they'd ever build a church here he'd come back if they wanted him and be the first preacher—rector, I mean, and stay."

"I wonder," I said, "when they'll build it."

"So do they."

"Do you know," I asked, "if he had a little daughter with him?"

"He did and the finest little girl she looked to be that I ever see. Know her?"

"A little, yes, sir. Quite a little and I like her."

"I like *you,* sonny, and like is hardly strong enough, and Martha comes right out and uses the word love. It don't look like we'll have district school this winter. There's too much snow on the ground and with three years of weeding out of our young people by scarlet fever and two bad crops and the fact that our last teacher was thrown out of the window by the boys don't help much. But we are going to do good by you, sonny, and next year if we don't have district school we'll board you in the village."

"Thank you," I said. "If it isn't too much trouble I

want to go to school. I can't write at all, and yet writing is the way my mother wants me to earn a living."

"That's just what I'm coming to," Mr. Burrows said. "Me and Martha wrote to the society that we didn't want to know who you belonged to once if they could give us a clear title to you as a son, but as soon as you've come out here with all your good-looking clothes and city manners, Martha, woman-like, is getting curious. She ain't said nothing, I'll admit, but I know she's getting curious because she is a woman, and one of these days she'll be asking me. Sonny, where was you born?"

"I was born in Blackwell's Island," I answered as steadily as I could and fighting hard to keep back the tears.

"I was born in a prison. My mother is in another cell now and in another prison, but I promised that I wouldn't write her because they'll keep her there longer if I do. But some day—some day—I'm going to get her and take her—and take her—— She is so beautiful—and I love her and—and——"

"Now you hop right over here, sonny." With his hands he reached over and took me in his arms and held me.

"It's all right, sonny, it's all right. Where you came from ain't your fault and you're here now and we're going to keep you. Not a word to Martha though, about this, to your mother, I mean, not a word. Let's go and shovel some more while the sun is out. I've got to think and think hard. See those buildings, to your right? Well, that's Moorhead. Looks like two mile off. Nearer to eleven. A mirage we call it." It was nice to be so near.

CHAPTER XIX

I INTRODUCE A WOMAN TO HER HUSBAND

WE FINISHED the path, a nice clean job so that the dead grass could be seen on the bottom. We then went into the house to eat. Mrs. Burrows had on a light-colored waist and a red ribbon around her neck. On each cheek was a small spot of red. Whether it was put there by her hands or by her heart I don't know. Mr. Burrows noticed her appearance and asked her very politely if she could wait the dinner for five minutes. She answered certainly, with a little flicker to her mouth that I had never seen before.

Mr. Burrows went to the bedroom and came out wearing a stiff white shirt and a white collar and a tie with little blue spots in it; not many spots and not very blue. It was pantomine acknowledgment of his wife's attempt to make herself beautiful. It is true that below the line of the little table-cloth which Mrs. Burrows had put on the table Mr. Burrows was all overalls and boots, but he had only asked for five minutes and besides there was more work to do upon the farm.

The spirit of this meal was truly wonderful and from a house I moved into a home. Lanny Garrison's was larger but this one was mine. I told them stories that I had read. Some of them they had read when they

were children but had never thought of. I started a game asking each one in turn whether he could remember a certain character. Oliver Twist was a story that both had read and before we got through we said something about almost every one in the book from Oliver to the Artful Dodger, to Nancy, to Bill Sykes and his mud-bedraggled dog, the name of which none could remember; to Fagan, even down to the good old gentleman named Brownlow. None of us could remember with certainty where he figured, but we thought he had a silk handkerchief stolen and was the innocent cause of Oliver's arrest. Then I told them of going with my mother to a theater and seeing it played. Both of them asked at once how Nancy acted when Bill Sykes killed her with the butt of his gun and were much disappointed when I told them that that little matter was attended to off the stage and all that we got were muffled noises and spoken "Oh, Bills." When the "Oh, Bills" stopped we knew that Nancy was dead.

The ice was broken and if I had to be without my own mother I was well content to call this prairie farm-house my home. And as I now look out the window over the white stones and the waving grain beyond, I remember with love and affection those fine people who gave me a home when I had none, and made every sacrifice for me which they would have made for their own children if they had lived. At the moment they are in Moorhead, getting ready for a celebration of which I will write later. That at least is my present plan.

Mr. and Mrs. Burrows had read many books which I had not read and rather often they challenged each other. They surprised each other to feats with their

respective memories. "Minds been getting flabby," said Mr. Burrows, "till Sammy came. Too damn flabby."

Mrs. Burrows required and received an immediate apology. "He never swore, Sammy," Mrs. Burrows said, "when he was singing bass and I was singing soprano in the Woodstock choir."

This imputation of undue piety prompted Mr. Burrows to say that he didn't swear *when* he was singing, but often did before, and that he had no doubt that the congregation did its swearing afterward.

"Mentally, perhaps," Mrs. Burrows whispered to me, and Mr. Burrows winced under the charge that he was a mental swearer. I came to his rescue saying that I had heard him swear at one of the cows.

"Yes," Mrs. Burrows said, "at cows and horses he is pretty good, but you know very well that back in Vermont——"

"To hell with back in Vermont," said my father. "We live in Minnesota with a York State son. You get me, Duckling?" With this seismic disturbance, Mrs. Burrows found pleasant refuge in clearing the table and objurgating the dishpan. Mr. Burrows winked at me and swashbuckled to the barn.

One night after supper with the wind roaring outside and the stove roaring inside, I asked my father and mother if they would sing a few songs for me.

"Ridiculous," said my father.

"Impossible," said my mother. "We are too old for that. Perhaps he could sing but I couldn't."

"She's got it just reversed," Mr. Burrows said gallantly. "She could sing but she won't 'cause she doesn't want to show me up."

Mrs. Burrows had already put on a heavy coat and with a lighted lamp entered a room that was kept closed during the winter months. Mr. Burrows cleared his throat, his chest heaving in anticipation of the demands that would soon be made upon it. Preceded by a rush of cold air Mrs. Burrows returned with a hymn book and a tuning fork. She removed her coat and blew out the lamp, and then thumbed the pages of the hymn-book while Mr. Burrows held the tuning fork over the hot stove.

Caressing the tuning fork with his fingers to take its temperature he bit it boldly and emitted and held a long rich "do," while Mrs. Burrows, still thumbing the book, sounded a "do" an octave higher.

From the corner of her mouth, like a conspirator, she said, "How firma——"

"—foundation," sang Mr. Burrows like a frog from a log, and like boats into a lake they slipped into that grand old hymn. Hymn after hymn they sang. Both stood erect near a lamp which they had placed upon a shelf. Frequently their eyes left the book and they gazed mistily at the quiet God-fearing worshipers in front of them. In the front pew sat Sammy Leaubeau, knees drawn under his chin. How many pews there were behind him he didn't know because he didn't turn around.

Nearer My God to Thee came last. At eleven o'clock we went to bed.

CHAPTER XX

GAY AS A PARROT

I HAD heard the names of neighbors mentioned from time to time, also the names of the great and near great in Moorhead, but I had never seen any of them; farmer, merchant or banker. I liked the snow but I wanted to see newspapers and I wanted to see new faces and the town of Moorhead. Moorhead, chiefly because I knew my little friend Suzanne had been there. There was a little uncertainty in my mind as to whether she had said to me "remember" or "don't forget." This problem claimed my attention very often. Also which meant most was a question calling for my best thought.

One day a farmer, who had braved the snow, left some boxes addressed to Mr. Burrows on the road nearest to our house and directed attention to it by blowing a horn.

When Mr. Burrows, struggling three times through the snow, had got all the boxes into the house we opened them. They contained my mother's books and had been forwarded by the society. Within a day or two they were placed, and so nearly in their accustomed order as I could remember, in bookcases which Mr. Burrows and myself made out of some boards which we found in the barn. My mother had fashioned from an old petticoat a curtain

which she hung in front of the books to protect them from the dust. Usually after supper and before going to bed one of us read aloud to the other two.

Accustoming myself to the new spirit of the household I now wore my pajamas shamelessly. If they didn't go with a feather bed it was the bed's fault and not mine. In these lurid colors and just before going to bed and just before kissing them good night I used to clear a little space on the kitchen floor upon which I walked on my hands, turned cartwheels and played generally the part of a young clown.

One Saturday night I burned a piece of cork over a lamp chimney and blackened my face. Appearing suddenly in bright yellow pajamas I went through some antics which led my father to confess that he, when a young man, had done a little amateur work in cork. He refused to black up, but he removed his shoes and sang a negro song. Between the verses he executed a few steps on the floor which caused Mrs. Burrows to say that if she had known that he could do that she never would have married him.

That permitted her husband to put on a wise look and say, "Honey, there's a whole lot of things you don't know about me." Which challenge permitted Mrs. Burrows to put on an arch look which probably she had never put on before, or at least in the presence of her husband.

That night just before I went to sleep I heard Mrs. Burrows say, "Don't do that. You're as gay as a parrot."

I was not familiar with parrots. In fact I had never heard that they were gay, but before I got to sleep I had reached the conclusion that Mr. Burrows had had the temerity to pinch Mrs. Burrows' cheek.

In any event, the next morning at breakfast he pinched her cheek once while she was eating and once, and more than once, when she poured the milk from the pails into the pans. She offered no resistance and did not accuse him of resembling a parrot. On this particular morning Mrs. Burrows started the day with a red ribbon around her throat but Mr. Burrows didn't "flash" his collar until the evening meal.

More books, more singing, a little tumbling by me, a little dancing by my father and some talk of buying an organ in the fall if crops and prices would allow it.

CHAPTER XXI

MY FIRST LETTER

WITH a child, old things and old places yield to the new, and the prairie snows were fast covering the green grass of Gramercy Park and the cobble-stones and asphalt of Great Jones Street and Avenue C, and the howling of prairie winds drove from memory the hurdy-gurdy cries of Cooper Union Square. Old friends are less yielding. They are the enemies of new introductions and ghost-like challenge your right to make a friend of a new acquaintance.

Every night I thought of my real mother, Anne, and when I went to bed I tried to think of new reasons and good ones for her taking things out of shops and not paying for them. I decided that she had the same character and the same resisting power that other women had, but pretty things pulled harder on her than upon others.

In the house there was a little horse-shoe magnet. Mr. Burrows showed me how a nail, if placed close to it, would tremble, jump the gap and cling to the magnet. A match wouldn't jump or even tremble. I likened pretty things in store windows to the magnet, and my mother to the shiny, trembling, jumping, little nail. The magnet pulled so hard she *had* to jump. And if the magnet pulled as

hard on the lady wooden matches, why then they would steal too.

Pretty things looked better on Anne than they did on the honest women who paid for things. But again why did she take so many things—so many more than she could use or wear? To clothe and feed me? No. She stole too much for that. Then to get money to get back her husband? To go to Italy and show him what a mistake he had made? Could she go like a rag-bag? Certainly not. And didn't she have just as much right to get back a stolen husband as Wanamaker or Macy a stolen dress?

I knew that I was not to write to her for a year. She had decided so. And the society agents had told me so. But would I ever hear from her, even at the end of a year? The person to write to, and the person she wanted to have when she got out of prison was Giuseppe Torello. My name was Burrows. I was up by the roots.

No mail came to the Burrows' house. We were half a mile from the highway, and the highway was covered with very deep snow. Once in a great while we would hear sleigh-bells, and Mrs. Burrows would run to the window and blow a hole in the frost on the window-pane.

"Only the doctor," she would say. "I wonder who is sick now."

I asked her one day if nobody ever came to see them, to stop at the house. "They used to," she said, "but after our children died people thought we were queer, not 'all there,' and they stopped coming. I don't blame them. We had stopped going long before they stopped coming. But when the weather breaks up I'll go and see some folks so the folks will come here and see us—and you.

They'll like you, Sammy. You're different. They'll ask a lot of questions, but there are a lot of things I don't know just so I can say I don't know."

It was late afternoon. Sleigh-bells rang in the lonely road, and rang as if purposely shaken by people's hands and not carelessly by horses' bodies. We went to the window and then outdoors. A bob-sled had stopped some half-mile from the house and a farmer shouted. The air was heavy with flakeless snow and the wind blew from the shouting farmer straight west to us.

"Letter," he shouted, "for Samuel Burrows."

"That's me," I cried. "Will he bring it up?"

"No," Mr. Burrows replied. "The horses can't break through the snow crust without cutting their legs. That's Torson, a Norwegian from Buffalo Creek. He'll stick the letter in a slit in a post. See, he is doing it now!"

Over the top of the snow crust I ran, hatless and fast. A letter for me! I soon had it in my hand. Printed on the envelope was One Hundred and Five East Twenty-second Street, New York. I hoped that what was inside would be printed as was the address on the outside. If printed I could read but if written I couldn't. The letter was from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and being typewritten I could read it.

Samuel Burrows,
Glyndon, Clay County,
Minnesota.

Dear Samuel:

By an arrangement made by this society with the judge who sentenced your former mother, and with the warden of Auburn Prison, your former mother may, if she wishes, write to you once upon the completion of her first year in prison, and once every six months thereafter. Such

letters will be mailed from the warden's office. One letter may be written by you in reply to each received from your former mother, and should be addressed in care of the Prison Warden, Auburn, New York.

At the present time your former mother is in good health, is industrious and obeys the prison rules. This you will be glad to know. But, as we advise all legally adopted children, look ahead and not behind. Good luck to you. Work hard. Don't just take a living. Earn it.

R. L. S., Agent.

Over the snow crust I walked slowly home. In a year or nearly a year I might get a letter. There was nothing to do but wait. I told Mr. and Mrs. Burrows that my letter was "personal." That was the first time I had ever used this luxurious word. But when I saw the woebegone look and the pained expression on both their faces I handed them the letter with a request that they both read it. Each refused.

I lifted the lid of the stove and the hot flame of hard maple wood, with the help of the rising wind, swept chimneyward the curled and blackened paper that urged Sammy Leaubeau to look ahead and not behind.

"It was not from my mother," I said.

That night I went to bed early but lay awake, for in the next room my father and mother were talking in low tones. My ears, although perfectly willing, could not distinguish the words but their tones were sad and moanful. It was plain that they were disturbed and not in exact agreement. I felt sure that my letter was the cause of their talk. Each sentence had a falling inflection as though the conversation was definitely abandoned. A long pause. Other sentences with a steadily descending inflection, leaving the general impression that however

sad they considered a situation it was really much worse than they thought it was.

I wonder if I make myself plain. Lugubrious, is the single word, if a single word will do. Turn your little searchlights back on your early days and put yourself in bed, with two people talking in the next room. If what I have said is then found empty, yours was a happy life and your house was a cheerful home.

My parents had adopted me and they wanted the property, roots and all of him, and a monopoly upon child affection which parents hope to have. They feared that the tendrils, or whatever those hairy little things on roots are called, were reaching out and feeling for little Anne Leaubeau.

That night I dreamed of sleigh-bells, but it was long days and long nights before I heard them again.

In the morning it was a battle to get to the barn. Several of the chickens were frozen stiff and the hogs fought for the under places in the pile. It was the longest, hardest, coldest blizzard ever known. It came straight from the Hudson Bay and stayed a week. We burned more wood, ate more meat and more gravy, and fed all the animals double.

The live stock, horses, cows, pigs and chickens, huddled in the corner of the barn least visited by the wind, and the pigeons were carried into the house. The wind howled through the night regretting its misspent day. In the day-time the wind seemed dying and nearly dead, and sounded as if a giant a hundred miles long was suffocating and gasping for air. Wolves and the wickeder winds love the night. A whole earth then separates them from their enemy, the sun, and of no one else are they afraid.

The night grew worse. As the animals huddled in the barn so we huddled in the house. With Anne in Gramercy Square I cuddled,—not the word for an adopted son fighting the cold.

In coats and breeches lined with sheep-skin, and with me in the middle we slept in the family bed, their corn-husk mattress underneath and my feather bed above. If you touched a cold foot you didn't know whether it was yours or theirs. I lay with the top of my head locked between my father's arm and body. My feet reached as far as theirs.

No wind of that violence can be steady. It had to rest. In resting times, as though from the housetop, came the crying of wolves. After the crying of the wolves the renewed assaults of the winds were welcome.

The blizzard over, it was decided that we all go into Glyndon. Burrows to buy bran and his wife to buy turkey-red cloth and brass rods for window curtains. In a bob-sled we went. The bob-sled had wide runners and the horses had broad feet. There were other bobs in the road, but we had few salutations.

The sun was delightful. I had never seen wolf tracks before and I was thrilled when shown them. I had first met the wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood* and he has always been my favorite reading animal. Anne used to say that he was cast for villain parts at birth. "But I am sure," she said, "that wolves have their heroes and that in the pack there must be some very fine juveniles—leading young men. We say, 'what awful fangs,' and little Miss Wolf tells her mother, 'I am certainly attracted by Timberino's beautiful teeth. They are so thrillingly irregular. I think he is the catch of the pack.' "

In town we went to George Q. Pukker's general store. Pukker was plain and unassuming, in straw cuffs and an all-over apron with stripes of faded blue and discolored white.

If George Q. Pukker had a predominating odor it was codfish with honorable mention for linseed oil and a first reserve for dried apples. Perhaps he dried-appled himself for a purpose.

In Sing Sing Prison I worked close to a man who reeked of bay rum. I complained and he heeded the complaint. The next day I told him that on reflection I thought I liked bay rum.

By the codfish Pukker came honestly and unavoidably. The farmers while waiting around the stove would pick a dried codfish from a box and twirl it as a New York policeman twirls a billy. When his turn came to be served he would throw his fish on the floor and at closing time George Q., all of whose habits I learned when I lived in Moorhead and worked for him, had to go about picking up dried fish which had been more or less aromatized by their nearness to a red-hot stove.

My mother and I picked the red for the curtains. George Q. had no brass rods and that was left for a Chicago mail-order house.

While my father bought bran at the feed store near the railroad tracks and loaded it my mother wrote the order for curtain rods, and I, on the station platform, watched the train come in from the East. The same conductor who had brought me West. I thought of speaking to him but the mail sack had been dumped, and the conductor waving his lantern in the quick arriving dusk and yelling, "Next stop, Moorhead," boarded his moving

train. I have never seen a place that trains seemed more eager to leave than Glyndon, Clay County, Minnesota, where the Northern Pacific reaches for the Pacific and the Great Northern starts for Hudson Bay and quits at Winnipeg.

The station agent took the mail sack limp upon his back and I followed him back to the store. There was soon a mail in from the West and Mrs. Pukker didn't distribute the mail until she had stamped the contents of the second bag.

The Norwegians talked more snow, also more alcohol—George Q. was no slouch as a bootlegger—and the street was full of bob-sleds leaving for home with their saga-singing drivers. I had heard that the prairie vikings beat their wives when drunk. It was never denied. Some said the wives liked it. Others that they didn't feel it. Others that it "was them or the horses" and the farm was run better if it was "them." No bones were broken and the blood circulation was improved. Love was stimulated that would otherwise die.

At last the mail was handed to me. Burrows had a lot of envelopes from Oklahoma oil companies, and one from the Moorhead National Bank and one from the Red River Farm Mortgage Company. I had a letter too, post-marked Auburn, New York, one from a small town in France, and one from Butte, Montana. I could not read script and had to wait until we got home to have the letters read to me. But I could read Auburn and Butte upon the envelopes and buttoned them all in against a thumping heart.

Our horses were whinnying and stamping and pulling from the hitching post. We were the last to leave except

a drunken Norsk whose little wife, at Pukker's suggestion, had gone for the village marshal. She was with child, Mrs. Pukker told my mother, and under the conditions it didn't seem quite safe to let her and Olaf go home together; that his wife could drive home alone and that the walk in the morning would do Olaf good and that when he was sober he was the best farmer in the country, and the best father, and had taken potato prizes for size, for weight and number of eyes which, of course, in the potato world, meant family possibilities.

CHAPTER XXII

MORE MAIL AND A BLIZZARD

THE horses untied, we were off for home. A stout man with a blue army hat and a star on his coat and a club in his hand was just going into Pukker's store. I wanted to wait to see the Norwegian arrested, but the horses bounded across the railroad tracks, timing their speed and measuring their strength against the blizzard which they knew was coming; knew it before people did. Hadn't they whinnied their warning while New England-bred farmers gossiped about the effect on a Teuton wife of a few well-aimed kicks in the boneless parts of her body. Rough talkers, these sons of God-worshiping New England. Where to kick a wife, Norsk, appealed to the humor of the Anglo-Saxe. Falstaff's smut was written for the Virgin Queen. The queen applauded and a state was named for her. New England prayed in churches and relaxed in horse sheds. Anne used to say that if the world was divided into dirty talkers and dirty doers, she had rather be talked about than talk.

The horses trotted fast. There didn't seem to be so much snow falling, and we could hear bells and loud and drunken songs ahead (the wind was in our faces), but a lantern hung on the end of the wagon pole showed no tracks ahead. Burrows said he didn't much fear a

blizzard or we would hear the wolves howling. All of us had woolen scarves tied tight around our necks and ears. He added that he didn't fear a blizzard half as much as reading the letter from the Moorhead National Bank.

The horses, not urged, broke into a run. There was a wet spot in my scarf in front of my mouth. The spot was very wet in the middle but frozen on the edges. I loosened the scarf to tie it where I wouldn't feel the wet spot so much. The howl of wolves from nowhere was followed by an icy blast of wind in my face.

So soon as I could take breath I said, "I hear the wolves."

"Yes," said Burrows, "and the horses are sidling. That means they want to turn their backs and quit." He rose in the sled and tightened the reins, a whip in one hand.

Mrs. Burrows, who hadn't spoken since I had put my letters in my pocket at the store, drew my head into her lap. "We have had them before, son," she said.

"I feel better if I look up," I replied, and she released my head. I watched the lantern swaying right and left ahead. Plainly the horses were trying to turn around, and with whip, reins and oaths my father was trying to keep them straight.

"If I let these critters stop," he said, "I can never get them started. I can lick 'em home and in the dark they can find the way. The lantern hurts—any light and fire is no good for horses. Say, sonny, I got to keep licking, do you suppose you could crawl out and get——"

The wind blew away the rest of his sentence or his breath stopped. A man can't drink water out of a high-

pressure fire nozzle and if air is blown fast enough against him he can't get any of it. I crawled out on the tongue of the sled and hanging tight and low kept from being blown under the horses' feet. I got the lantern and carried it back to the sled, my eyes closed and my face pricked with snow. We kept the lantern lighted under the robes and I warmed my hands a little on the chimney. The storm lulled and the wolves carried on.

"How far are we from home?" my mother asked my father.

"Can't tell," he said. He held his watch against the lantern. "Time don't mean much against this wind and in this snow. I've seen horses run faster than this and get nowhere." The horses were trotting slowly and the air was nearly still.

"I think it is over," I ventured, not thinking but hoping.

"You're wrong," said Burrows. "She's just taking a fresh hold for a new start. I know it, and what is worse the horses know it." Despite his whip they were walking. I held the lantern high and the horses were turning their heads toward us.

Mr. Burrows and the horses were right. The wind had shifted to blow across instead of against us, but the fury was greater than before. One crack of the whip. Our horses had stopped, the wind again dead in their faces. Both horses were whimpering.

"Bought to plow. Feet too big for this," said Mr. Burrows. "We got to talk the night through. If we go to sleep it's the end for all." I shook Mrs. Burrows. She was sound asleep.

"Mother!" I cried. "Mother, wake up!"

"Not time yet, Sammy," she mumbled. "Keep close to me and lie right here."

"Close and right between us. Pretty cold around here," my father said, yawning and dropping to the floor of the wagon. I shook him by the arm, but he said nothing.

I held the lantern close to the whiffletrees and just ahead of the trees both horses were on the ground and crying. I seized the reins. This was a job for no Burrows but for the son of the fiercely loving Fingers Leaubeau. Would my mother have let the horses go to the ground? I answered "no." It was a pleasant thought. I would rest for a moment, I thought, as I rubbed my eyes and then I would go out and coax the horses to their feet or waken Mr. Burrows or something. But first I must rest. I sat on the floor of the wagon.

What were the bells? The scissors grinder in Great Jones Street or the chimes from Grace Church just above? I was standing near the bootblack's stand near the Occidental Hotel. "Just a moment, Sammy," said my mother, "Anne will have to go back—she forgot something.—Hello, Tim——"

"To the barn, you sons—of—beeshes—to the barn!" The chimes were close to my ears and in the dark I heard the rush of horses. The little Norsk woman who was afraid of a beating was driving home alone.

The reins were pulled from my hands. I heard our horses struggling for a footing and far ahead the crack of a whip and bells and bitches blown back against my ears.

I rose to my feet but the sudden moving of our sled threw me back to the floor. Our horses were in furious

pursuit of the flying Norsk. Mr. Burrows seized the reins.

"We'll make it, Sammy," he said. "Keep slapping your mother in the face till she wakes. Slap her hard or she won't feel it. Punch her with your fist."

I did.

"I'm all right, Sammy," she said.

We followed in the tracks left by the sled ahead of us and were soon on a piece of smooth, wind swept road.

"To the barn," we could the Norsky shriek. "To the barn you ——"

With a giant leap our horses swerved to the right. The wind turned and the little Norsk and her bells and her bitches were lost in the night.

"We are near to home," said Burrows, leaning and reaching to find his wife's wrist. We were leaping and bounding over wind swept, frozen furrows and arrived on the far and leeward side of the barn.

Mr. Burrows carried his wife into the house and put wood on the fire while I put coffee on the stove. Mrs. Burrows looked dazedly about and I carried the lantern while Mr. Burows put out the horses.

The wind was dying to a whisper. "Not this time but next," it said. It piffled away into silence, and exhausted we all went to bed.

Mr. Burrows rose early and fed the stock and then went back to bed. All of us needed sleep and it was nearly noon when we sat down to breakfast. Mrs. Burrows had brought from Glyndon the night before a new kind of oatmeal and we were keen to try it, but before we ate Mr. Burrows bowed his head. "Lord, God in Heaven," he said, "for delivery from the storm we give

our grateful thanks." My head too was bowed as I wondered whether or not the little Norsk woman would thank God for her delivery from the storm.

Prayer is a great thing. After or before? How do we know that the little woman hadn't prayed for strength with which to whip her horses. Let us think that she did.

"Sammy," Mrs. Burrows asked right after we had left the table, "do you want me to read to you the three letters you got last night?"

"I was just going to ask," I said, "just as soon as you and father had eaten. I'll get them now."

"Funny a boy like him can't read writing," Mr. Burrows said to his wife as I emerged from my bedroom.

"I'd like to have you read first the letter from France," I said to Mrs. Burrows, "and then the letter from Butte, Montana, and last of all and very slowly the letter from my mother."

And in the order requested, Mrs. Burrows standing, with Mr. Burrows and me sitting, the letters were read.

The letter from Lanny Garrison.

Dear Sammy.

I was a rotten old thing to leave you the way I did. I feel as if I were a terrible old witch who had pulled a drowning baby out of water and then loosened its dear little hands and let it sink. I am terrible and I know it. I would have written you before, but there was delay in getting your address. They tell me you are on a farm with real people with a promise of an education. I dare say Mr. and Mrs. Burrows are worth a dozen of Georgie and me. You see old General Garrison, meaning Georgie's mother, has all the money bags, and when she read about the Jukes (bad news has first crack

at the cables) and then read that we were going to adopt one of the little Jukes she sent for us both and we went like two children after a stick of candy. The dear old soul's respiration was way, way up. She really was very sick—but not so sick that she couldn't pull strings to make Georgie a second-class consul, and we are living in a house that used to be full of counts and countesses and marked cards, secret chambers and corpses. Outside of servants and the dear old Admiral, Georgie and I are the only ones living here now.

But here, Sammy, is the news. Along in the springtime there will be three of us. I pray for a boy and I honestly hope he'll grow up to look like you. For luck I say 'he' and always think of 'him.' My mother had an old uncle named Samuel. She always called him or at least spoke of him as United States. Served him right for he just wouldn't chop off his chin whiskers. But what I am getting at is this: Samuel Lanson Garrison will be born at Nice or Monte Carlo or Cairo, Rome, Brussels or Amalfi in the April or May to come. I'll send you his picture.

Write me when you can, care Brown Brothers, Paris, France. Georgie sends love and says you've got a chance to be President for you were born in America.

My deep love,
Lanny.

The Letter from Suzanne.

Dear Sammy:

Lots of times I have thought of writing you a letter, but you told me once, or somebody did, that you couldn't read writing. You ought to learn and I suppose you will, and also how to write.

We are coming to Moorhead, father and I, if they'll only build him a church. I hope they will build it. Do you? Father is fine and I am fine, and I hope you are feeling the same.

I hope that you will soon learn to write but if you should decide to print put on the envelope Lock Box 212.

Your ever friend,
Suzanne Garrison Stuart.

The letter from Auburn Prison.

My darling:

Of course you can't write to me until eight months are gone. Nor me to you. That is fixed by the court, and the Gerry Society, and the warden is on the watch. That is right, just as it should be. But a woman is leaving prison to-day, and exactly at six o'clock she will stand on the sidewalk, far under my window (to get the right window she will count nine from the front center entrance) and will catch this letter. You see if she doesn't. And if she does you might send her a sack of meal and a leg of any meat but pork. Of course, you wouldn't know where to send it. Mother is just trying to get funny, for her handkerchief is wetter than her eyes, and the sleeves of my dress are the stuff pillows are made of. Tough striped cloth with a sand-papery surface. N. G. to wipe the eyes with. When you are here a month your crying days are supposed to be over. Perhaps they will be soon. But I know I'll cry again when I have to put your new name on the envelope. A prisoner coming in (a new one whom mother used to know) got next to some one and some one to somebody and somebody to some one who got your new name and address, and believe me, little boy, when I write it, I'll write it quick(ly) and look away when I do it.

"Is your new 'Mother' as nice as I am? You have eight months in which to learn to write. Good God, how I wish I could steer your chubby hand, but others will do it and do it well. I can see you puckering your lips, as mother, I mean Anne, is puckering now. Everybody puckers when he learns to write and some people keep

it up always. Me. Dear Sammy, sweet, little Sammy of those golden, golden (marmalade) days.

If your mother—I might as well get used to it—is as nice as I am, don't mention it when you write. But if not write me why not. Your new father, whatever he is, is a great improvement over——. I read in the paper that he is out of the fur business and in the "jewelry trade" up on Fifth Avenue.

The prisoners here have terrible words in their vocabulary and most of them brand-new to me; vile, and I don't know what half of them mean but they fit the fur man exactly. I shall never tell you his name because I don't want you burned to death for murder.

I am keeping young. Twitch, twitch, and bend, and squirm. More room for twitching than bending. You remember how I drew the little girl into an old, old lady? No lines on me except the top of my head.

An Italian woman here for some knife didos at a wedding, was in Italy this summer. Torello is the best known violinist in Italy. *'Si si, bravis—simo,'* says Didos. I am learning what Italian I can from knife-didos for some day I shall win Torello back, and love him in his own *Si-si-sole-mio-tra-la-la* language. As old people we shall probably sit on a hill somewhere and Giuseppe will watch the bees and hear the birds, half asleep in a velvet coat, while I read to him wonderful stories by Sammy which will take the world by storm, as the lovable old hypocrite pretends to listen to them, and says *bravissimo* in his sleep.

Don't write until the year is up. The warden would catch you, and that would pile up Fingers' time. Besides I mustn't expect a letter unless I *know* it is coming. Most of the women who leave here for insane asylums got crazy waiting for rumbles that never come. A rumble is a letter here. So it was in Blackwell's Island when I was there. When you do write, draw a picture of your little heart right under "I love you, Sammy." And cross it with your pen.

My life, my love, my great man to be.

Anne Fingers Leaubeau Torello.

Learn to sing. Have something to swap when your voice changes.

Mother.

CHAPTER XXIII

I LEARN TO WRITE

IN THE winter on the prairies calendars continue as usual, but the clock ceases to be the master of the house and becomes a wound-up servant. People sleep when sleepy and eat when hungry; and horses, cows, hogs, chickens and pigeons sleep, eat and chew their cuds. As for me I learned to write. I felt that I was too old to print and mother had always said that when I had something to say I should learn to write.

Mrs. Burrows borrowed copy-books from Mr. Mike Mallinger, the clerk of the district school, and bought pencils, a pencil sharpener and some partly used ledgers with ruled pages from George Q. Pukker, and I went right at it.

"Honesty is the best policy." "Honesty is the best policy." Little letters one space high; *f, g, j, p, y* and *z* with tails below the line. Heavy on the down stroke and easy on the up. "Hitch your wagon to a star." "People in glass houses." "Faith, Hope and Charity," and "Dare to do." "I can not tell a lie." "Love thy mother and obey thy father." With these I filled the ledger, with one or two changes as my clumsy hand grew bolder.

"I love my mother. Both of them." Mrs. Burrows

looked over and corrected my work, and besides I did love her.

"I hate my father, my real one." This last Mrs. Burrows said she didn't like. That it was wicked, but her husband said that it was spontaneous. But as a concession to Vermont, for every "I hate my father" I was obliged to write ten of "Forgive thy enemies." I wrote both, hating and not forgiving.

There was no session of the district school that winter, but long before the plowing-time my penmanship, while not very good, attained a standard which I have never been able or willing to surpass.

"What you do do well." "Slow but sure," and some diary notes, in present use, filled two more ledgers, semi-occupied with codfish, linseed and pork, canton-flannel, sundries and staple products.

Of course I didn't write all the time and I had the choice of reading old books again or reading the Bible. I looked over all of it. I skipped the "begats" and skimmed very rapidly over the sanitary code—Leviticus, I think—which modern conveniences and medical science have rendered nearly obselete. Obsolescent is the right word. About all that is left of Leviticus is the ban on the hog. What a terrible thing for foxes and for skunks when their fur is in the fashion; and for hogs, what a blessing was Leviticus.

For melodrama and wisdom and fine writings and life as it was, the Old Testament I considered to be a good book, even if the print was very small; but for life as it is and is to be, give me what the Reverend George Stuart later called the Blessed Ares of Christ and the letters and sermons of that fighting, sea-sailing, back-lashed Apostle Paul.

Read once, and right now the speech of Paul on Mars Hill, which was at Athens and not at Rome. It will curdle you and send you to bed with a Christian Fourth of July in your soul.

On Christmas Day I think bands should play anthems in the parks and in the streets and then more people would go to hear the organs. Who or what sold most tickets to *Uncle Tom's Cabin?* The Bloodhounds.

Spring came. The farm was harrowed and we were in town to buy seed wheat, and I took from the postmistress, Mrs. Pukker, a very dirty envelope, much crumpled and branded with a stain from the base of a coffee cup. It read:

Dear Sammy:

A colored lady who has completed her visit here and who is about to leave our midst, has promised to mail this letter so soon as she can get two cents.

The world's greatest thief has just died on tour in Rome, and Torello writes me with fine Italian warmth that next to his Amati (what the little wop calls his fiddle), that he loves me best of all. That really makes me the third horse in the race; the finish being Torello, Amati, Anne. With me they run, Sammy first, Torello and Anne dead heat for second and Amati hasn't started. Mother is joking. Anne runs nowhere and between you and Torello it is close.

The world's greatest thief died from too tight lacing. No room for her wicked heart. A few flip flops would have saved her. Not much room here for flopping but mother works her tummy like an accordeon (if you hold it up and down), and my garter (they give me round ones here, some stretched before I got them) would go around my waist if I had any way to get it there, but shoulders to the north of me and hips to the south of me—what a delightful little fool I am! A girl who can

laugh in a cell just isn't made to stay there. That resolution, far as I am concerned, is unanimous. Fingers can walk on her hands, and all that, but what she can't do is whereas herself out of Stir—the inside and low down for prison.

Between you and Torello, Sammy, it is very, very close. *Oh,* so close. I called him little wop but he is my little wop and a vintage lover deluxy luxe. He knows that you have been adopted, and he knows, or thinks he knows, the way to a woman's heart. To mine he can walk blindfolded, but of course I don't tell him that. He tells me that he is very famous and very noble, and that he had plenty of time to cut the corset laces if he wanted to.

I exercise when I am not braiding or mending or plaiting straw. I do it for Torello, but if he had never existed I would do it for Anne. When I stand I haven't a wrinkle, and mighty few when I sit. I am the only guest in this house that doesn't overflow a chair. Torello says that his violin is unusually sweet and responsive and obedient. So is Fingers. *I* say that. Not Torello. At least I am sweet and responsive.

Some high diddle surgeon is over from Naples. Twice he has been feeling my head and X-raying me for bumps that don't belong. He has got a very ambitious little knife that wants to get into everything, but I tell the great Doctor Naples to take his little knife back where he came from and lean his old X-ray contraption against the black heart of Torello and look for bumps and rough spots there. I don't mean that at all, but I hope that Doctor Naples will tell the wop consul in New York, that the wop in New York will tell it to some Guinea in Firenzi, who will tell the same to the lovable black-hearted, wretched, sighing Torello. Of course if Torello insists, Fingers' head will get the knife, up in the little telephone box at the base of the skull where the insulation is worn off the take wire, which crossed on the fingers control wire. We'll see what we shall feel.

Torello wants his wife honest. Perhaps he thinks I'll steal his fiddle.

Don't drink coffee, Sammy, until you are seventy inches tall. And don't eat pork until your belt won't go around your chest. Hug me in your dreams as I do you. Not dreams with your eyes closed but wide, wide open. If you see a post or any old stick, on that spot tarry and pretend it's Anne.

People tell me here that the first year is longer than the next two. It is easy to believe, but I am of the happy sort. I have purposely omitted the name of your adopters but I know that they are honorable and I am truly grateful. I am ready for bed in my cell. My nightgown doesn't fit and I can see my heart thumping. It thumps for Sammy and it always will. *Dear* Sammy. Good Sammy—Good night.

Here she drew four fingers. A postcript followed:

Oh—I forgot. Eyes is here for putting her Al to the sword. His own sword. The kind they strop. Eyes is a scream. She says the judge who sentenced her was too darned honey-fying to Al. That he wasn't worth ten years of no woman's time, and wherever he is he ain't too hot to dispreciate it. She also says that safety and a razor ain't no wise proper kinfolks and that if Gillette was to run for President he wouldn't get no more colored votes than Robert E. Lee. Eyes is the hit of the place here. She is in charge of the laundry and says that the quality of the prison lin-ger-ee is an insult to an honest washwoman—ought to be rinsed in a lye pot and ironed with an asphalt roller. Anne is laughing so she is going to bed. Kisses with this hand. Lights out with the other. It's now dark. Honest.

Anne.

The fall crops were good but the prices low, labor was high for reaping, binding and threshing, and the

roads hub-deep with mud. Paying mortgage interest, and half what he owed at the bank, and counting his time at a dollar a day and mine at fifty cents, Mr. Burrows said he came out a decimal under even.

The district school was a little wooden box placed in one of the corners made by the intersection of two highways. From our farm-house it was an exact two miles, and we were thought to be rather near. In the center of the schoolroom was a boxwood stove; red-hot or stone cold, according to the season. The pupils were seated according to their ages. The youngest next to the stove, and growing older toward the windows and doors when in winter it was coldest and in the spring the hottest.

School kept in October and November and December, and again in March, April and May. In the first month and in the last two months it was taught by Miss Emma Stevenson; an otherwise dull face was reddened by the most individual and delightful freckles. In the three successive years of my attendance she wore the same gray dress and the same black bodice. The black cuffs were new each year, but the bodice seams kept holding despite the increasing strain upon them. Front and back, the little caudal tips of the bodice were always erect. Miss Stevenson was conscientious and was so informed by the school board on the last day of every term.

In the winter months, when pupils of man-size entered school to learn to speak English, the school was taught by Olaf Greeg, a powerful Norwegian, chosen for his muscles and his ability to police the school. Some of the pupils brought alcohol for lunch and the school was considered unsafe for a woman. Expulsions would have lessened the financial aid from the state.

Greeg couldn't teach very well and it was difficult to understand his English. I dare say that his best qualifications were his bulldog courage and his need of a monthly salary. He used neither cane nor ruler (little Miss Stevenson used both; a cane for feet-shuffling boys and a ruler for whispering little girls) but relied upon his fists. A thrashing he called a "lickum," of which his passive verb form was "lickot." When one of the pupils was "lickot" he didn't come to school for several days, and when he came was unsightly and saturated with arnica. The school air reeked of arnica and of liniments of the kind rubbed on horses after long days on the plow.

The school meant little to me and perhaps I wouldn't mention it at all unless I thought the reader would wonder why I "didn't go."

In arithmetic I was the school dunce. In reading, spelling and grammar I knew more with the book closed than either Miss Stevenson or Greeg with it open. Modest statement. How modest you can not know.

If asked the product of seven times eight it would take me many stammering seconds to answer fifty-nine. I am sure, however, had I been told eight separate adventures of seven separate people that I could have repeated the fifty-six stories with approximate accuracy.

Of what I learned there I shall say no more. The mind takes photographs and some of them are very dim. Not till they screen do we know the reel. The stove, little Miss Stevenson and the slugging Viking, bred down from pirates to a school-teacher, legally paid. Children in black coming mornings from the horizon and growing bigger and blacker on fields of white snow, and returning to the horizon at four o'clock, growing smaller and

browner until faded out in darkness on roads making custard pie quarters of the prairie, trudging single file except where an older led a younger by the hand. I always walked alone, fast in the morning and slowly at night.

I wonder if the box-like school is standing—and the box stove burning. Has Miss Stevenson changed her bodice? Has Greeg softened his fists—or with mellowing age does he strike with the open hand? Perhaps some one has planted a vine and the school is a better school. Or is it burned or blown to the eight winds of Heaven?

Like the school children into afternoon darkness, and I say it with shame, my mother was fading out. Months had passed and no word from her. Nothing gives comfort and strength like a letter from the beloved, but giving is a subtracting process and my letter, still kept in the feathers of my bed, had given me so much that it had little left, and only in high winds and thunderstorms did I take it from its shifting refuge.

Respect and authority and legal adoption and food and shelter are strong things, and a thieving little mother, clever and pretty as she may be, is not advantaged with a growing boy when her prettiness and cleverness are more than a thousand miles away. It is true there were railroad tracks and engines, but they were not for her and not for me. One letter a year! The Children's Society knew its business. If you transplant, get all the roots and shake the clods.

To my new name, Samuel Burrows, I was getting accustomed and also to blue and brown overalls and ticking shirts. Hardly a newcomer now, I was more like a person returned from a visit to New York. Calves

and colts, plows, furrows and seeds drove to distant places dogs, cats, cabs, street-cleaners and banana peels.

My father's voice had become gentle, but when plowing, he on one side of a field and I on the other, he would roar into the winds: "How are the legs?" "How's she cutting?" "Quit when you want to, sonny."

Mrs. Burrows made puddings and new things to eat, and wore clean white aprons every day but Monday. Coming home from plowing I picked wild roses in the coulies and Mrs. Burrows wore them in her hair, and tied ribbons of a near shade around her waist. She bought thinner stockings and in the house wore low shoes with thinner soles.

On Sundays we three stood together near the prairie graves of their children and from a book and with seeds from Pukker's store, and from sketches made to scale by me, we scratched, planted and grew a garden of flowers, not over but around the graves. A square of red and blue and gold, and inside an oblong of matted pale yellow and brown and saffron grass.

Sometimes on work days when it rained and no work was done in the field, we "fixed" and planted in the cemetery. "Burying-ground," Mrs. Burrows called it. The Swedes called it "grave-yardt" and my father, "out there."

CHAPTER XXIV

FRANKLIN WARD AND ALICE IVES

MONEY was being saved slowly and what a dollar "now" would be worth in eight years gave both father and Mrs. Burrows delightful lead-pencil minutes. I was some day to go to Moorhead High and later to the State University, and "none of this agricultural business when you got there." My father was sure of that.

It was the fall of the year and again my mother wrote me. On the envelope, stamped in a circle, were the letters A-U-B-U-R-N, N. Y.

Dear Sammy:

My one year is up. Three hundred and sixty-five thousand days. I can write you my annual letter, read by the warden (a very delightful man with whom we are all suppressedly in love) and to be posted in this sweet little town of which I get rapturous glimpses through my window.

You may now write me one letter, and not again until this day, one year. Put what you say on heavy paper so that I can better hear it crackle under my two ears at night. So make it two pages at least and whichever side I lie on I'll have a crackle under each ear.

How tall are you? Heredity speaking, you should be a young whale. Ugh! Has the farm animals? Who, what and how many? Do you ever see an Indian? What do you eat? Do you go to school? Are some of the girls

pretty? What I really mean is do they all, to you, look alike—or speaking with the hair brushed way, way back, do you differentiate? Big word for my dear little boy, but tear it apart at the "t" and you'll have no trouble. Please place your open hand (left) on your forehead, with the knuckles out, with side of little finger at top of your little nose and tell me whether you can touch your hair—good solid hair—not just a wandering lock—with your thumb, without wiggling it up. High-brow, low-brow, or no-brow, mother must know. Prison papers are full of those damned Jukes. Your forehead ought to be two inches up and down. Mother's is four and I'll bet that yours is over four. Your dear little heart sends too much clean blood to your head. No peanut could hold it. Of course, Sammy darling, I would say no pumpkin but mother isn't going to make you laugh unless she can see your teeth which she is sure you brush up and down two times each day. I am sure you do. But tell me. Mother must know, not guess. I should put mother in quotation marks but I won't. To your "mother" and father give my real love and my real gratitude. Tell them I gave them a real boy, and that if he makes roots in their hearts, I'll never go scratching around them. *If* he makes roots! They'll be sprouting this spring in China and you'll flower on both sides of the Earth. The most foolish thing that mother ever did was the wisest. Still flirting with mother's head, but *very* still, is a curious little knife, but I don't like its looks and I give it the stare stony. Stony issimo. It is shaped like a salt spoon but razor sharp on all edges. Eyes, a shadow of her former self, but still a forty when calm and a perfect forty-six when excited, says niggers gets locked up for killing no-'counts and surgeons get ribbons for assassinating quality. But of course if Giuseppe, who is soon coming over, insists, Fingers will perfume herself with chloroform and with one hand in Torello's and both in yours, the shiny little knife will get its chance. But never, never until I hear

from my darling, darling son. A fighter in the Bowery, a swimmer in the river and the gallant little knight of Gramercy Park. Perhaps some day you'll marry the little girl in white, with blue sash, and the close-to-knocking little knees.

God, Sammy, how I love you! Write,

Anne.

After supper I read the letter to Mr. and Mrs. Burrows. We were fine friends. I explained who Eyes was. And they watched me to see that my thumb, without spreading, touched my hair. I finished the letter, and the clock turning on more power, ticked heavier and louder than I had ever heard it before. Mr. Burrows walked shoeless in the small circle that the size of the room allowed, and Mrs. Burrows sat still and quiet, peering through the window, through which in the day she could see the graves which I had kept bright with violets and pansies and which on death bequeathed to larkspur their little places under the sun.

"You say when you answer, Sam,—you tell your mother"—Mr. Burrows spoke slowly and looked at the floor near to his wife's chair—"you tell her that if the knife makes her good we will undo the law and send you back." He looked bashfully at Mrs. Burrows, who looked beautiful.

"You are a real man," she said, and kissed him on the mouth.

Then she turned to me. "And tell her, Sammy, that if the knife leaves her as she is, as of course it will, that as soon as she gets out she can come right here to live all her life. And anything she sees her fingers are welcome to."

"Her fingers might take a shine to the weeds in the onion bed," Burrows said, pioneering from pathos to humor.

"Or to the milk in the cow's bag," Mrs. Burrows added, getting out ink and heavy paper for me, and turning tears to laughter. Both kissed me good night and left me to write, many, many pages. When I had finished the clock was buzzing notice that it would soon strike twelve.

In the morning I wrote some more, telling her what I had been doing, but mostly reminding her of things we had done together and the breakfasts we had eaten in Great Jones Street and just off Gramercy Park.

I asked Mr. Burrows and Mrs. Burrows too, if they wished to read it before it was sealed, but they were fine people and both asked me to put in at the bottom of the letter that no one had read it but her. I did so, and under that I drew a heart and then crossed the heart, and carried the letter to the highway where there was a little tin box for mail.

The crops were not very good and prices were low, but it was decided that I enter the first year class in the Moorhead High School. Moorhead was the big town of the county and close to it, divided by a river, was Fargo, the largest city in North Dakota.

George Q. Pukker had acquired the largest store in Moorhead and he engaged me to work afternoons between four and six, and Mrs. Redfern, a widow on Fifth Street, gave me a room for sleep and study in exchange for taking care of the furnace and escorting her to weekly evening prayer-meeting in the Presbyterian Church. The arrangement was generally approved as

"nice for everybody." Polly Redfern was too fat to shovel coal. Everybody knew that—with their eyes. She has been putting on one piece at a time ever since her station-agent husband had been held up and shot. Every one knew that from their sense of hearing.

Mrs. Redfern feared God but the dark she feared more, and would not accept public male "escortage," as she called it, until Themistocles had been dead and buried a year and a day. Escortage, in Mrs. Redfern's diction, rhymed with shortage, although now and then she daringly Frenchified it in the rear, as in "mirage."

Polly Redfern was less than thirty and legitimately blonde. On escortage she was firm, but on callers plastic. Of these she had a number, of whom none was ever seen at prayer meeting. "Better sofa stuff than pew stuff, Polly," was an oft quoted remark at Pukker's store.

When Pukker bought into the "city" he bought the best and the male élite did its loafing at Pukker's. "I don't want no loafers in my place unless they is at least a buying prospect," said Pukker, in ejecting a barrel-sitter who bought his tobacco across the street, and gave clearance to the same on Pukker's floor.

Mrs. Redfern's suitors were all of social note, but their addresses to the widow and their intentions were matters of public speculation.

"Barnard hot-aired her but was really figuring for her to let him figure on a new hot-water heating system." He had an agency. It was charged that he had told the widow "straight at her face" that she had the jump on Venus by an extra arm, at least, and that when New York dressing styles hit Moorhead he wouldn't wonder but he'd have more to say. The widow's rules were no

bar to her skating on the river, and a high wind and a broken skate strap had inspired Barnard to peaks of rhetoric and a slap in the face. After three or four days of probation, however, he was again a regular caller.

The town although paved here and there was essentially a dirt road city and its wit derived its character from its clay. The widow, around at Pukker's particularly, after making a purchase or leaving an order, was the subject and prima donna of that strange admixture of compliment and insult heaped on ladies who live on unpaved streets.

The chief of the fire department made a reference to the widow and me of sufficient promise to attract a crowd, but a straight punch to the jaw with an up-lift finish learned in Great Jones Street, checked the witty slander and advertised me favorably to Pukker's trade and best society.

Manners gained I presumed from my mother, or possibly inside the picket fence on Gramercy Park, and clean white collars, and a figure which was more erect than the Pukker standard availed me much. I made deliveries of course at back doors, but lifted my hat to front porches as I ran and frequently heard, "Come around front door some evening soon," and sometimes I went.

On Saturdays I had forenoons to myself, but worked at the store from twelve to six. Mr. and Mrs. Burrows were regular customers in any decent kind of weather and it was I who waited upon them. Golden moments of personal triumph.

Mrs. Burrows had received a "cash legacy from a married decedent sister" according to a local news item

and she verified the rumor at the store by ordering curtains, bedsteads and carpets, in the selection of which all three of us must be agreed before a sale, and I had to promise not to come home for Sunday before everything was "laid down and set up."

Mrs. Burrows wasn't "going crazy and spending all of her money." She had already invested half of it in an oil stock and had some cash in readiness if her agent said the word to get more. Her agent was an old school friend in Vermont who had gone to Kansas, followed by his home town paper and he had read with pleasure of the legacy and was hers to serve and obey in a dictated-but-signed-in-his-absence letter.

As the wheat pours out of the Red River Valley in August, the money flows back in September and these are the dancing red-corpuscle days of any community, town, village or city that has anything to sell.

Pukker urged me so hard to give him week-days in the store for September and part of October that before I entered the high school I had attended three weekly prayer-meetings with Mrs. Polly Redfern who walked close-clutched to my arm through three blocks of pitch darkness in the fear of the Lord and nothing else. The service started in twilight but the black came down before we left the church and Mrs. Redfern's pneumatic elbow sought a contact with my ribs as we gingerly felt for four descending steps from church to sidewalk.

On the third Monday of October I entered first year high school in the brick, two-story building at the corner of Eighth Street and Fourth Avenue. Franklin Ward was the principal and teacher of algebra, geometry and civil government. He was a graduate of William Col-

lege; was always dressed for the tennis court, and wore a college fraternity pin of gold and black enamel on the white shirt-waist of Miss Alice Ives. He was said to be saving money with which to go to a law school. Miss Ives taught English, Latin and whatever you wanted to take, and wore her pin just under the curve on the heart-side of her waist.

Miss Ives lived in Massachusetts, and Mr. Ward had accepted the Moorhead position on condition that the school board engage Miss Ives. The pair were a howling hit. School, church, sociables, on the tennis court, anywhere, everywhere, and always they did their stuff. They looked to me like Gramercy Parkers.

Miss Ives was suspected of smoking out of hours, but the evidence didn't satisfy the board. They took the position that if it could be proved that Miss Ives smoked cigarettes she would be dismissed at once, but it would take more evidence than burned matches and butts of cigarettes found on or near her desk.

Some student who got low marks might have strewn about the matches, and tobacco odor from her clothes wasn't even hear-say and they weren't convicting on smells. "Ask her?" "Certainly not." No such procedure was contemplated by the fathers. Dead against the Spirit of the Republic. All right in Russia to make people answer who were known to be liars from birth, but they just didn't dare to ask Miss Ives.

She looked like my mother except that her eyes were china-blue with the pupil off center. Fairy godmother should be prayed to for eyes a hair line from cross-eyes to rock an empire or to rock a cradle.

CHAPTER XXV

TORELLO WINS

MISS Ives and Mr. Ward went now and then to the theater in Fargo, sometimes taking me. With a pick-up fourth we played tennis Saturday mornings, and Thanksgiving-day we three went out to the farm for Thursday to Sunday night.

We were good companions. I was taller than Alice (I called her that way out of school) and nearly so tall as Mr. Ward.

On the farm, with two rooms added to the house, and new furniture and with curtains and carpets and turkey and new clothes for Mrs. Burrows and with snow on the ground and with father in a new cut-away coat and sky blue trousers, hitched to the danger-point of bi-section, and with a mandolin and a banjo and Massachusetts fingers and with new blue dishes and red cranberries on the table—Sunday night came all too soon. To top it all Alice knew some one from Mrs. Burrows' town in Vermont.

Standing in the doorway, the horses pawing in the snow, and all standing, we sang *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow.* Then Alice kissed Mr. and Mrs. Burrows solidly and me brushingly.

Back to Moorhead on the hard frosty snow, Alice

covered warm between us and leaning impartially when she thought of it. When she didn't, one side of me was cold with air inrushing straight from the Hudson Bay. I flanked my side with my arm and thought of Fingers in the years to come, and when I would leave and where would I meet her. On the steps? Or a hotel near by the prison?

The next morning I was conjugating *timeo* in Miss Ives' Latin class when Mr. Ward came in hurriedly and looking toward me whispered to Miss Ives. On a sign from both I followed Mr. Ward into the hall, leaving *timeo* to fare in other and perhaps better hands.

Mr. Ward took from his pocket a cablegram and said, "Sam, here's a cablegram sent from New York by telegram." He took me to his own office and left me there to read it. It was sent from Naples, Italy, and was not from my mother as I had feared and hoped. It was from Giuseppe Torello, and it read:

Samuel Burrows, Care of Probate Court, City of Moorhead, County of Clay, State of Minnesota in the United States of America.

Anne Leaubeau has returned to the bed and the board of her lawful and her full forgiven and fully forgiving husband, Giuseppe Torello. She is cured of her malady and is in possession of a pardon, she not to have communication to or from Samuel Burrows, born of her body but not her son. A violation means that her deportation follow and she complete the term of her sentence to the full execution of her malady, and her love for Samuel Burrows is gone and born again is her never quite dying love for Torello. A lawyer has made two copies of this message and she have sworn to believe to be true what is in message contained. She tells me to convey to you her happiness and her good wish and

delightful memory of her love. We travel much in Europe making profession of violin and there is us by cable no place to reach.

G. Torello.

I returned to the Latin class and was the last pupil called. "I ought to have feared; you ought to have feared; he ought to have feared; we ought——"

The bell rang. The class proceeded to another room, and slipping into my seat with my head on the desk I let the sobs come as they would. When I raised my head Mr. Ward and Alice Ives stood near me. A snow bird was beating against the window and we let it in.

At the store that afternoon I made mistakes in weighing and proposed that I make late deliveries on the wagon. None of our deliveries were ever made in the afternoon.

Mr. Ward and Alice and a nurse from the hospital took me to the farm, back to my father and mother, and that night I slept at home, that night and for many more; the nurse staying always. It was fever. Hills and dales of fever on the nurse's chart. "Growing fast. Too long for the size of his foot. Might have studied too hard. Heart can do only so much. Absolute quiet. In a few weeks—any kind of luck——" A bucket of ice at night and a washtub full of sleet by day, and soft footed, light-fingered nurse, night and day. Arms as big as those of Eyes but Scandinavian smooth. When she held my head up to feed me my neck fitted into the crook of her arm as in a velvet cushioned vise, while her feeding hand moved rhythmic and slow, like a patient piston.

The room was dark but I knew the night by the howling of wind and the watchful breathing of the nurse. I batted balls in Gramercy Park, ran under traffic on

the Bowery, when I wasn't pinned down, and walked with my mother in ruins of buildings at Rome. She kicked up marble dust and gave me water to drink from a basin.

"That's enough," said the nurse, and with wet lips and cold throat I dropped back on the pillow and in the pitchy dark read the blue and white cablegram from Torello. The winds yelled, "No, it isn't true. You are dreaming." I wakened and the cable was true. Born in a cell and dumped on a prairie. Dumped with kindness, but dumped and told to stay there.

I was getting better. Curtains were raised and ice and sleet were taken away. I disliked less the smell of hot milk and twice a day my father brought in the milk pail, steaming an inch deep with foam.

The wind was down, the sun was shining and the animals from the barn sent good wishes and funny messages, delivered by my facetious father. Lady Deadlock was about to experiment again with motherhood and wanted me to be the first to know. Christmas was hardly the time but it was her time. A pigeon had a grain of corn stuck crosswise in his throat and would be obliged to me for the loan of a lead pencil. Didn't like to eat so fast, but with that hungry gang that he associated with he had to eat fast or he wouldn't eat at all.

My mother spread jelly and marmalade on toast and let me eat without help. I liked to hold the marmalade in the sun.

The nurse went home. Father took her to Moorhead in the bob-sled Friday afternoon and at night brought Mr. Ward, Miss Ives, a banjo and a mandolin and a sponge cake from Mrs. Redfern. Mrs. Redfern

made the cake the day I was taken home, figuring, she said, that when I was well enough to eat the cake the cake would be well enough to eat. In the middle the cake was wasted to nothing and on the edges was a mass of brittle crumbs. It looked like the crater of a small, old and over-flowing volcano.

Alice kissed me and Mr. Ward said, "Sam, in June we want you to be best man."

Mrs. Burrows had been cooking supper while her husband put out the horses and did the chores. Mr. Ward brought the table into my room. Alice followed with an extra leaf, and between them, by bracing and tugging, they got the extra leaf in. A blast of cold air announced that the barn chores were completed and I could hear my father blowing like a whale into a basin of water.

Before I went to sleep it was decided that Mr. Ward and Alice and Mrs. Redfern should come down on Christmas Day for dinner.

In the morning I slept late, and when I wakened Mr. Ward and Alice had gone. Dates at the schoolhouse with slow pupils who were trying to catch up, but mother told me that she had let them both read my cablegram from Torello to make such use of it as they saw best.

"No one but you ever got a cablegram up in this country and the whole town of Moorhead is saturated with its contents, adulterated with vitriol. People up here want their gossip extra strong or it don't kick. In Vermont, cider just a little bit hard was quite enough but out here—they had to have things stronger," Mr. Burrows said judicially, and added in mitigation, "But let you get lost, strayed or stolen, the whole prarie is lan-

terns and bonfires. They'll kick you down but they'll lift you up. Sammy, you're here to stay, and God not opposing it you're going to be good as the next one and better than the best one and the one next to him."

He was shaking the moth balls out of sky-blue trousers against the coming Christmas, while Mrs. Burrows made a list of things to eat that came from a store. Mr. Burrows clothes-pinned his trousers to a clothes line outdoors and confirmed and examined critically in every light a white shirt which had been returned from a Fargo laundry.

"Slantwise against the sun," he said, "this shirt looks like the bosom was oil painted. Some starch!" He replaced the shirt in its paper wrappings and put it back in its drawer.

"Wifey——"

Mrs. Burrows looked up bewildered, but Mr. Burrows, reddening, stood his ground and restarted and finished his sentence.

"Wifey, down under cranberries and celery and olives put down on your list one four-in-hand necktie. Last time I was dressed up I looked like a defeated politician."

"One four-in-hand necktie," spoke Mrs. Burrows, as she wrote.

"Blue with a figure into it," Mr. Burrows added. A cold blast of air and the bang of a door and he was gone to the barn and to Moorhead.

CHAPTER XXVI

CHRISTMAS

PROPPED on two pillows, I wondered if ever an Episcopal church would be built in Moorhead. Suzanne and I had exchanged a few short letters and hers I had kept. The last was from a little town in Oregon.

"Your sickness has changed your looks a lot, Sam," my mother said. "Let me hold your pillows outdoors a minute and smooth you up a little before I get to my ironing. Try sitting on the edge of the bed a minute."

With the triumph of sure recovery I swung to the edge of the bed, and in a moment was resting again on a sheet without wrinkles and pillows delightfully cold.

When I wakened late in the afternoon, I found Mrs. Burrows in a rocking chair close to my bed. She was washing my face and hands when sleigh-bells growing louder, announced Mr. Burrows' return from Moorhead. He carried in a bushel basket all of the things on Mrs. Burrows' list, but declined her request to exhibit the four-in-hand tie.

"Not till you see it on me, old girl." He departed for the barn.

" 'Old girl,' " Mrs. Burrows repeated, with a wink. "Joe hasn't called me old girl since—well, since Hector's father was a pup."

"How long is it, mother," I asked, "since you ever winked before?"

"A long, long time, Sammy, but don't you worry but what this old girl will wink when there is anything to wink at." She gave me a hard hug and a kiss. "Old girls like to be called old girl," she said. "Makes 'em feel young and sporty."

"While I was waiting at Pukker's store," said father, returning and warming his hands, "I heard all the latest on Ward and that pretty Ives girl. The school board has had complaints against them. One for too close holding in a public dance at the Columbia Hotel. Case dismissed. One against Miss Ives for wearing her skirts too short. Miss Ives has been requested to wear them longer—if she wants to. One against Ward and Miss Ives for unconventional conduct on school property during hours of duty. The case against 'em was that Ward was seen by his pupils at close of class in algebra, and his hair was slick and smooth brushed. At recess he went into Miss Ives' room and came out with his hair all mussed and touseled."

"Goodness! What did the board do?" my mother asked.

"They did just right," my father answered. "Officially they laid the matter on the table, with the understanding that the clerk of the board would tip Ward off to come to school with his hair already touseled, or if he didn't like that, buy himself a pocket comb and mirror. They're a scream, this pair. The whole town is dancing closer and talking cleaner."

"Have you noticed how Sam has changed since he was sick?" my mother asked abruptly.

"Wouldn't know him for the same Sam," said my father. "Different set to the bone angles in his face. Besides he's got to learn to strop a razor, this young kid of ours."

" 'This young kid of ours! Old Girl! Us farmers! Some people!' " Mrs. Burrows murmured.

"Just for that," my father said, "I'm going to show you my blue tie."

Christmas morning was clear and cold, and sleigh-bells were easy to hear. After breakfast I went to the barn with lump sugar and rock salt, ears of corn, carrots and whole grains of wheat. Mr. and Mrs. Burrows went with me.

The animals received me frantically. The horses whinnied. Lady Deadlock left her litter and the pigeons fluttered down from the rafters. They were glad to see me, or they felt the spirit of the day. Sugar, salt, carrots, corn and wheat. Cranberries and nuts, tree candles and stockings—do they help the Christmas spirit or are they the Christmas spirit?

Warmly dressed we stayed in the barn for half an hour. The sudden rising of the wind and the twitching of horses' ears said "blizzard," and through a fine dust of snow we returned to the house.

One of the evidences of Mrs. Burrows' legacy, or of better prices for wheat, was a telephone, and Mr. Burrows said that much as he would miss them it was only fair to telephone Mr. Ward and tell him of the coming blizzard.

He called up the Columbia Hotel and found Alice waiting for her sleigh. She wasn't afraid of blizzards. Just love to go back East and tell about being caught in

a blizzard and if the old blizzard didn't arrive she would feel that she was gypped. They were bringing holly wreaths, and Mrs. Redfern couldn't come. Things had happened since her acceptance and it wouldn't be fair to the hot-water furnace man to leave him for the first Christmas dinner after "what had happened," which would be put in the paper when the year was up.

Mr. Burrows urged haste against the blizzard but Alice said that the sleigh hadn't come yet, that she was going to reverse the call and talk "my Christmas fool head off."

Frank Ward had gone to the telegraph station to send merry Christmas to his mother and hers, then he was going to get the sleigh and then she was going to stop talking.

She wanted Mrs. Burrows on the wire and after that she wanted me if I was strong enough to listen. To Mrs. Burrows she said "Merry Christmas" and some dress and cloak and hat patter, and then she asked for me. She lowered her voice which had been filling our house with its gleeful eighth notes and said, "Sammy, do you love your—do you love the girl in Italy?"

"*Do* I?" I answered. "All day. Ever since I got up. All day. All the time. That's why I was sick."

"Of course you were," said Alice. "What a foolish, wicked question. Frank is just here and in his hand he has for Samuel Burrows a cablegram from Ro-ma Ital-ia." Her voice broke in a sobbing attempt at laughter. My own heart was bounding high.

"We're off," said Alice. "Keep the home blizzards blowing. Thank you a lot."

I lay down on my bed for a rest, leaving my door

open. Mrs. Burrows put in the turkey, while Mr. Burrows filled the stove reservoir with hot water for an all-over bath.

The program was for Mr. Burrows to shave and bathe while Mrs. Burrows got things into the oven and on to the stove, and then watch until the reservoir was hot again. Then Mr. to dress in the kitchen, all except his white shirt and watch the stove while Mrs. bathed and dressed all but her over dress. She to finish setting the table and put on her new dress soon as they heard the sleigh in the yard.

At the refilling of the reservoir I went to sleep, happy with the world, and there I slept on the top of the bed with a blanket tossed over. Fingers held my hand and Fingers kept tucking the blanket under my chin, and said, "Pretty soon we shall take a walk on the Avenue where we won't see that terrible, waddling, snow-eating, hop-headed Eyes." But Eyes had me by the throat and was wringing my bastard neck when Mrs. Burrows waked me.

"Just time to wash, sonny. The wind is north and blowing down the sound of light harness sleigh-bells."

I looked out of the window. Not a flake of snow could I see but I knew the air was full of them. Cloud up a bowl of water with household ammonia and that was the color of all outdoors. The wind was one steady, high-pitched howl. The house was leaning south and the floors were cold as ice. The rest of the house was warm. Mr. and Mrs. Burrows strained their ears at window cracks for the sound of sleigh-bells, and I moved the kettle from the stove to the floor so that there were no sounds but the wind and the little skin explosions of the turkey in the oven.

"Damn fools!" said Mr. Burrows. "Like to die in each other's arms. Livery horses are cowards. In a blizzard like this they—I'm going to hitch and go looking."

Mrs. Burrows, with her hair fluffed, and her cheeks red, and without her over dress, was an angel of beauty. I had told her that mother had twitched her face and I think Mrs. Burrows had been secretly twitching hers. She looked so young and so plump that there could be no doubt about it.

Mr. Burrows, in a cutaway coat and sky blue trousers, put on his fur coat, hugged the plump angel and slipped into the storm.

Mrs. Burrows and I put more wood in the fire and drew chairs from the dining-room table to the stove.

"Sammy, we all like to be called 'old girl.' This is Christmas and I do love God. But God forgive me, it's a hard world. I suppose if I was that kind, it's times like these that I would like to smoke a cigarette—or something."

I don't know how to spell the sounds of sleigh-bells. With every step of the horse they throw out all the jingles they have and a horse has four legs. Ting-a-ling isn't even near, but borne down on the wind, steady and louder, was the sound of bells.

"Young people and a young horse," said Mrs. Burrows.

The door flew open. "You hear them bells, don't you?" shrieked Mr. Burrows. "And *I* can see the black spot. Didn't I tell you, old girl? Go get your dress on. You look like a magazine cover." He was gone.

Bells! Bells! Bells! The air was full of them.

The horse was again on the north and south section-line, and the wind was pushing the sleigh behind him. Get right with a blizzard and it will take you where you want to go. It amplifies sleigh-bells and is a tide of fortune in the air.

The bells were near, smacked by the wind against our windows. With a springy step, making faces over her shoulder, Mrs. Burrows ran to her bedroom to put on her dress and I ran hatless to the barn.

Alice Ives was hanging a holly wreath on a cow's horns. "The place to celebrate Christmas," she said, "is a manger."

CHAPTER XXVII

CON AMORE

MR. WARD handed me my blue and white cablegram, and I ran back to the house, leaving Mr. Ward and Alice blanketing their little red horse.

Near the stove and alone, I opened what for weeks I had opened and read in my dreams. The words were typewritten:

"*Solo mio. Con amore.* A. Torello."

Alice came in and I asked her what the words were. She frowned and took the message to the window. Mrs. Burrows came in as she read, but Alice held her hand up for silence and Mrs. Burrows tiptoed, standing still.

"'*Solo*' is easy," said Alice. "Italian is Latin, you know."

"Then it means 'alone' from *solus*," I said.

"Not quite. '*Solus*' is 'only' and '*mio*' is 'my.' My only one. '*Amore*,' of course, is 'love.' And '*con*' ought to be 'against.' Oh, no, '*con*' is 'with'—like Latin '*cum*.' 'My only one with love,' that's it."

She tossed the folded paper straight into my hand, and with head back, and chest out, a foot extended, her fur

coat loosened, and hands spread lover like, she trilled the house full of Caruso's *Con Amore*. She sang two words and tra-la-la-ed the rest.

"When you get well, you'll not get any of these." She sprang forward and kissed me. Alice, I suppose, was what might be called a kissy girl. Well, what of that? Doctors of theology have long stopped thundering and doctors of medicine, I am sure, don't mean what they say.

Monday came on Washington's Birthday and was a holiday. On Tuesday morning, living again at Mrs. Redfern's, I went back to my desk in school, and in two months was officially pronounced to be "caught up" in my lessons.

Spring came early. The Red River of the North is important only in geographies and in the spring. It overflows its banks, but not in a raging torrent. It touches nothing powerful. It sweeps away shanties and carries away provisions. If a family has but one pig the river takes it; if very few chickens the river takes them. It might take an organ but never a piano. It shortens the lives of grandmothers and occasionally drowns a drunkard.

The Red River, like a circus pickpocket, is a seasonal thief. The Ohio and the Mississippi are highwaymen with guns and burglars with tools. No respecters and unafraid. The Red is a porch-climber, or viewed from the cellar, a broken water main or a defective sewer. To the gates of the prosperous came the River but no farther.

For a few days and a few nights poor people slept

in rich men's houses and poor babies drank cold sweet milk, holding glasses in their little fat hands. Clean little hands. Dirty little hands in Shanty-town holding rusty tin cups.

Of these week-end refugees Mrs. Redfern had a houseful. I tried to be near when they were fed. The young ones reveled in the bathtub (Mrs. Redfern had two), but the elders were trained to fear the water. I was sorry when they were gone. One of the women lingered to have a baby, but on its birthday she carried it home, also a basket of food and some little clothes.

The river people were hurt but little. They carried home more than they had owned, and found their houses with little trouble. Until another spring they were safe and they became quickly acquainted with their new neighbors, with most of whom they had never quarreled.

The people on the higher ground were made better. The dirty yellow river cleaned their souls, so Mr. Stuart said in a sermon. "For it *is* more happy to give than receive," he said in the fervor of one who has made a a discovery.

"The words of our Savior," he continued, "were recorded in the Greek language although spoken in another, and hundreds of years later translated into English by people who had never spoken either Hebrew or Greek."

"Blessed," he said he thought should be changed to "happy." That "happy" is the next word to the finest and most loved word in our language and that word is "love" itself. That "blessed" was a Sunday word and that "happy" was good for all seven days. That good fathers want their children to be happy and that the Great Father

wanted his children to be happy, and that Christ addressed himself to little children in simple language so that the big ones would listen and understand.

To hear Mr. Stuart's words came the multitudes. The little church, quickly built, was small, and on some Sundays Mr. Stuart spoke twice in the forenoon and twice late in the afternoon, playing tennis in the middle of the day. Against his playing tennis on Sunday resolutions were passed, but the bishop refused to interfere and more and more the people came to his little church.

What Mr. Stuart said on Sunday was often street and store talk on Monday. From my position in Pukker's store I learned that Mr. Stuart had persuaded many that Christianity provided the best working rule for a happy life. In persuading his people to make the necessary effort to live a Christian life he was less successful. He said that he was like a pony pulling a freight train up a muddy hill, but that he was a well-shod pony and that, like the great British admiral, he would not be elsewhere. That God had not called him to preach, that he had prepared himself for the ministry because he believed that in such occupation lay his own road to happiness.

In Pukker's store Barnard, the hot-water furnace man, said, "I've been over to the rectory lately kind of quick-sighting around to figure on a furnace. Looks like to me that dominie of ours ain't far removed from money. Very heavy furniture. House ain't cluttered up like our leading houses are but, by the piece, from the mahogany beds to the copper spittoons, the rectory is on top of the town. By an eyeful, yes, sir, boys, by an eyeful."

"Sure he ain't far off from money," said a clerk from

a jewelry store. "We fixed a pinion in a watch of his that's worth five hundred dollars if it's worth a cent. 'George from Aunt Jane, Paris, France,' and a date is engraved into it. Beautiful thing to look at. An honor to repair it."

George Q. Pukker was a Methodist so it was all right for him to say what he did without driving away trade.

"There ain't a Methodist minister nowhere," he said, "who ain't supporting a couple of aunts. I mean giving them *something*. Methodists' aunts don't marry, and ain't nothing. That way with the Episcopalians? Not on your life. Episcopal aunts are an asset. Taking little and giving a lot. My wife says the lace on that little Stuart girl's petticoat cost more than all her wedding underwear and believe me she has got more white goods than I thought was in the valley."

"Just being a minister for a lark, I guess," said Barnard. "I guess I ought to figure on a higher-priced heater than I was laying out for."

"Great man for this town," said the jeweler, as I handed him twelve pounds of granulated sugar for a dollar.

CHAPTER XXVIII

PAUL OF THE PRAIRIES

LATE in June the high school closed for the summer and likewise the Episcopal Church. The graduation exercises of the high school were held in the Moorhead Opera-House. I was captain of ushers. It was our duty to seat people and pass flowers over the footlights. The weather was hot. Lettuce leaves in the store and mens' collars and ladies' dresses in the opera-house and the white dresses of graduating girls showed the heat while the Reverend George Stuart delivered the Baccalaureate sermon. On a table on the platform was a large pitcher of iced water.

"It is pleasant to remember," Mr. Stuart began, "that on the day this little piece of ice was cut out of the river, men suffered from cold and prayed for warmer weather. That prayer is this night being answered. When we are too hot we must not think of other hot days and how we suffered then but of cold days—the coldest days when water was freezing and water-pipes were breaking and noses were white with frost.

"My dear, good, friends, the Ten Commandments are warnings posted on roads that most of us do not travel. And to our young friends who are about to enter life in its larger aspects I beg to submit my assurances that they are not in that class of rogues for the proper

policing of which Moses drew up his code of Thou Shalt Nots.

"I shall not dwell upon the Ten Commandments for you may obey them all and yet be disturbing forces and unhappy people. Rather would I call attention to the Beatitudes delivered on a high hill by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Engrave them on your hearts, my dear young friends, as verses engraved on tablets of stone, and you will indeed be happy warriors. The beatitudes. The Blessed Ares. You are learned people and you hold diplomas in proof thereof. Break beatitude into *beatus,* happy, and remember that the *tude* is like the *étude* on music covers and means study. Beatitudes. Studies in happiness.

"We live in a wheat-growing country where the daily prayer is higher prices for wheat. In this world of wheat and toil you are going out to make a living. For dollar wheat you will add your prayers and those of your sons. But remember this, my dear young people, and older people too, the prayer of the world is, Give us this day our daily bread. Dollar wheat and a gift of bread. Somewhere between lies happiness for all. And on this night which is really very warm, this little piece of ice is here to say it was not always thus." He sat down.

As I listened I thought of my mother, and how she would have heard with rapture one who thought and spoke so simply as this man.

As Mr. Stuart came out of the opera-house I approached boldly and said, "I am Samuel Burrows who used to be Sammy Leaubeau around Gramercy Park. Do you remember me?"

"Indeed I do," he answered, putting his hands upon my shoulders, "and if I wanted to forget you Suzanne wouldn't let me. How are you making?"

"Fine," I said. "Where is Suzanne? I didn't know but she would come here to school."

"She will enter school here in September. Just now, Sammy, she is in Europe with her aunt. When she gets out here you must come in and have dinner with us. Old New Yorkers all of us."

Other people were crowding about him and after thanking him I hurried back to Mrs. Redfern's. I helped her to place fifty-four chairs from Beck, the undertaker, in such a way that all of the guests could see Mrs. Redfern and Waldo Barnard, the hot-water-heater man, when the words were said and the vows were taken, and at the same time leave an aisle of retreat from the improvised altar to the stairway.

Mr. and Mrs. Burrows would be in for the wedding and we three had bought what I thought was a very wonderful gift; a set of Thackeray's complete works in half leather bindings.

In the morning Mr. Stuart telephoned me. "Come over to breakfast at once," he said. "Mr. Ward and Miss Ives are here and we will wait five minutes." At full speed I ran to the rectory.

At the table Alice made formal announcement of her engagement to Mr. Ward, and the ring was shown and passed around. We shook Mr. Ward's hand and heaped flowers around Alice's plate and in her lap. Talk was furiously fast.

"One year from this day," said Alice, "and right in this room, Frank and I shall be married."

"My best man shall be Samuel Burrows," said Mr. Ward.

Great hilarity. We were soon going to the Redfern wedding. I had been made acquainted at the store not once but a score of times with the great moment in the wooing of Mrs. Redfern. Barnard, the hot-water-heater man, had told the event to listeners old and new whenever he could find one. In condensed form I offered it as my share of table talk.

" 'I'd been trotting around to Polly's every night but lodge night carrying my blue-prints and submitting my figures for heating the house from roots to shingles. I made it a point to carry just one blue-print at a time and naturally it took pretty close sitting for Polly and me to look at the same thing at the same time. We must have gone over that old blue-print, folded across both our laps, a couple of dozen times, but I never made a false move, knees or elbows. But I was keeping track of the calendar all right and when Them Redfern had been gone exactily a year I put on my Sunday clothes and along with the blue-print I put into my pocket a break-down of figures, complete. Materials first. Furnace so much, freight and trucking included; so many feet of two-and-a-half-inch pipe at so much a foot; bronzing the same, lumped; so many elbows at so much to the elbow. Then I got at the bottom. Labor, so much, lumped. There we was on the sofa, and as I said, a year to the day, with blue-prints on our laps and the figures in my hand that was farthest away from Polly. It was so still you could hear a dog bark. "Polly," I said, "on material I've given you the low down. The labor, outside of floor-drilling and setting the furnace, I expect

to do myself—with loving care." Just a bit of knee pressure but not so much that I couldn't alibi out if Polly wants to remind me that it's a business talk. Polly don't remind me, although by pausing I give her plenty of chance. With my free hand, the one nearest to Polly, I take out a lead pencil. I ain't forgetting that I was a plumbers' helper once and I kept my voice modest but self-respecting. I ain't cringing for no woman. I says, "Polly, you say the word and the bill for labor I'll draw this pencil through and with loving care I'll take care of this here furnace for life. I'll be kind and loving and live as far as I can up to specifications. They ain't blueprinted, Polly, but I know what a husband ought to be and if you'll let me try it'll be my duty to erase Them Redfern right out of your mind, like a child would sponge a slate." Well, sir, Polly took the pencil right out of my hand and drew a line through near to five hundred dollars' worth of labor. "Waldo" (my middle name *is* Waldo, and at Polly's request I'm going to use it for first), she says, "you come right along into the house." And I showed her then and there a lesson in economy by turning off all the lights but what was needed. O' course what Polly don't know and won't know till we're hooked is what the groom's present is. It's a bill for furnace pipe and elbows full receipted.' "

"Outrageous," said Alice Ives.

"Plumber-like and to the point," said Mr. Ward.

"To Polly Redfern it seemed agreeable," said Mr. Stuart, looking at his gold watch, "and, Sam, you and I had better be going over. You can stop at the hotel to pick up your father and mother. Alice can wash the dishes and lock up and Frank will have to get all of our

luggage to the N. P. station. We are all going East on the same train."

I wonder if people returning East know how yearningly a western town says "good-by."

Mrs. Burrows in white, with a yellow rose, was waiting at the Grand Pacific Hotel, and my father soon joined us, coming from the livery stable where he had put out the horses. With a little soap and water he was ready, and we three walked through Fifth Street to attend the wedding of Mrs. Redfern and Mr. Waldo Barnard.

From the house Mr. and Mrs. Waldo Barnard drove to Detroit Lake in the groom's four-cylinder gift to the bride, and Alice Ives, Mr. Ward and Mr. Stuart walked to the railroad station. From the rear-end platform of the observation car they waved handkerchiefs and hands to Moorhead and Moorhead waved hands and handkerchiefs back. I stood between my father and my mother.

The rising of a sun to half the earth is a setting to half the world.

We drove to the farm, trotting briskly and meeting the drunk-to-be Norsk and his wife as we swung on to the gravel road south of town.

Black clouds were gathering and we had miles of weeds to rip out of corn and potatoes before the rain came. To a dead weed the rain is nothing and all that afternoon and Sunday, mile upon mile, my bare feet slapping the cool earth, I guided a horse-pulled cultivator under roots of thick green weeds.

Sunday night just after supper the rain fell, coming down straight and filling countless holes where weeds had been,—little cisterns for corn and potatoes.

Far into the night my father, my mother and I talked over what I ought to do when I graduated from high school. "Was graduated" is now said to be correct, but parents who graduated and worked at the first job they found seem to be more effective than their children who were graduated and became oriented and attempted to function vocationally.

In scholarship I had led the school in all subjects except mathematics and it was thought that I could graduate in two years and go from there right into the University of Minnesota for courses in agriculture, or if not that to the normal school in Moorhead for one year and see if perhaps I would like to be a teacher. They expected to leave the farm to me. Some day it would be worth a hundred dollars an acre. There were three hundred and twenty acres and both Mr. and Mrs. Burrows thought that if a school-teacher were rich it was the finest way for a man to spend his life.

I never became a teacher and I hardly think that I would have mentioned this discussion except that it leaped into my mind when I fought my way from the embraces of Rhode Island Rhedd in room sixty-nine in the old Glory Hotel, Seventh Avenue, New York City. Me, nineteen, and Rhoda Rhedd ten years older.

Papini, in his *Life of Christ,* page thirty-one, near the top, said that Egypt of old was the rich spawning bed of all the infamies. I had the youth of a Joseph and Rhoda had everything that Potiphar's wife had except Potiphar. Rhoda, being a convict, liked her men branded, for social equality, and into me went the branding-iron hot and sizzling, and yet there is no scar. Or is there? You be the judge.

Spawning beds of infamy! The Glory Flats were full of them. Every self-supporting Cleopatra in the place rested during the day and supported a Tony who was idle day and night. A desert without sand with sphinxes schooled in perjury. The building still stands not far from the Pennsylvania Railroad Station, but it has changed its name and changed its character, and like a man is entitled to have new intentions respected.

Have any of you in reading a book turned over a few pages and then gone back? I have turned the pages for you. Now we'll go back.

The August and September crops were enormous. For the coming year I was to pay for my room and board in Moorhead without working for it, and it was quite probable that my father and mother would hire a tenant to take care of the live stock through the winter, and for themselves rent a furnished house in town.

Mr. Burrows reduced the mortgage on his farm and could easily have paid it all. He decided, however, to buy an additional three hundred and twenty acres. That gave him a full section. One square mile of good prairie soil, black when turned over, and fifty inches deep.

To be sure it was all under heavy mortgage and he paid seven dollars a year for the use of every hundred that he borrowed, but sun, rain and work would attend to that. Notes become due, but so do crops. A dollar cost a dollar and seven cents, but one eye of a potato and one grain of seed wheat multiply faster and there were seven pigs to a litter and litters not long between. Fargo was growing into a real city with city prices for butter and eggs and chickens. Fourteen eggs under one hen—what was seven cents for a year's use of a dollar?

Mr. Burrows, on the night of the day he had signed the new mortgage, said, "Nature multiplies so much faster'n interest that it's a joke. If I had to pay ten per cent. I'd do it. Yes, or twenty or twenty-five. Marty, five years more of this and you can get your choice of living in Rutland, Montpelier or Burlington, Vermont, and when it comes to pew-sitting we won't have to count a lot of warts on the back of bankers' necks. By God, if I feel like it I'll be a candidate to pass the plate and cut the bread."

"Why, Joseph Zelotes Burrows!"

"That's me, and when I said 'By God' I said it prayerful. Cutting the bread, Martha, I should not have said, but you must never throw it again' me, and I'll stand on our children's graves and say to God and Heaven that I am sorry."

That night when I went to bed the moon was shining on little white gravestones and near by a tall man standing, and kneeling a Yankee woman in white, and wide awake I reviewed my world.

My mother was in Italy. Mr. Stuart and Suzanne were on the ocean homeward bound. Eyes was somewhere jabbing her arms or legs, and Torello violining. I wondered if Tom, of the green uniform, was still opening the gates of happiness on Gramercy Park and if orphan children were still peeking through the iron pickets. Curves, agents, cab drivers, policemen and the Juke family. My body was tired, but my mind was jumping and leaping and uncertain.

CHAPTER XXIX

PIG-TAILS LONGER

IN THE fall I entered the third-year class in the high school and in the seat in front of me sat Suzanne Stuart, and in the seat in front of me she has been sitting ever since. Her yellow braids were longer, she was taller and more slender than when she had said good-by in front of the Brevoort House in New York. Her back was very flat and she sat high and erect in her seat.

On account of muddy roads I was half an hour late in entering the classroom. I remembered Suzanne, but if she remembered me she showed no sign as I passed through the aisle to take my seat. Her blue eyes were proudly cold and her high cheek-bones and the point of her chin made a right-isosceles triangle. The class was reciting in physics.

"Samuel Burrows," said the teacher.

I rose and stood in the aisle.

"What is the formula for the velocity of falling bodies?"

"One half of gt^2," I answered.

"Good boy, Sammy," whispered Suzanne, her face turning and widening with a jack-o'-lantern smile.

When I had answered a few more questions and was seated Suzanne, half turning in her seat whispered, "I

saw your mother in Italy. She is peaches. You are lunching with dad and me and we are walking home together." And we did walk home together down Eighth Street, through First Street past Pukker's store and down to the rectory near the Northern Pacific bridge.

"I am so proud of you," Suzanne said.

"About what?"

"I always was."

"About what?"

"You weren't much on writing—were you?"

"I didn't know what to write. I mean I didn't know anything to write that I thought would interest you."

"Not what is said, Sammy. Who says it. We'll have to walk faster. We have no cook but me. Come on, let's hit it up. You'll have to pump water and do some other things. Did you like my letters?"

"Did I *like* them? I kept them all." We had turned the corner into a quiet street.

"Let's run," said Suzanne.

We ran.

"Can you talk while you run?" she asked easily.

With difficulty I answered, "Yes."

"I knew your mother would be a wonder," Suzanne murmured, "and so did dad. No surprise, you know."

We sped around another corner and the rectory was in sight.

"See the smoke coming out the chimney? Dear old dad is putting new coal in the kitchen stove. Keeps the water boiling. Right after you shake hands with dad you got to wash, peel and Frenchify some potatoes."

Much out of breath I shook hands with Mr. Stuart. Then I washed, peeled and cut potatoes into small lady-

fingers and they were sizzling when I went to the pump for water.

"Twenty strokes before you put the pitcher under," said Suzanne. "Dad never likes water unless there are little drops on the outside of the pitcher."

With the heaviest silver pitcher I had ever seen I went to the well.

Three at a table is a delightful arrangement for every one sits in the middle. Being in the middle begets ease and confidence.

"I like this town," said Mr. Stuart, "very much, but I mustn't stay too long."

"Some more Saint Paul stuff. I just know it," said Suzanne as she rose to remove some plates.

"Some more and some more and some more," laughed Mr. Stuart. With his eyes he followed Suzanne as, with tray aloft in solemn mimicking of a professional waitress, she swung gracefully rigid into the kitchen.

Mr. Stuart leaned forward as if to tell me a secret. "Saint Paul," he said, "was a great traveler. Wherever the fires of Christianity burned low, there was Saint Paul to fire them. He feared nothing and he feared none. Outside of his hatred, no, I'll say lack of appreciation, for women, he was the perfect man. I raised some money in New York to fit up a new railroad car as a chapel and it's about building it I have got to go to Saint Paul, and when it is finished I'll preach and christen in every town on the Northern Pacific and on the Great Northern railroads. Sparks with flame, Sammy. I can't do much but I am a disciple. At least I am disciplined. I'm getting so I play too much tennis and I get too fat on local praise. Saint Paul traveled fast and far and didn't stop

to hear applause. I've been getting lazy and good-for-nothing. Patmos, Melitos, Corinth and Thessalonica—I stopped at all of them this summer. Great stuff for lazy priests." Child loves are but seeds below the ground, and of them I know not how to write. Little events are recorded on stones and in public places and on public pages called history. Great events take place and are not recorded.

The great recorded event in Cæsar's life was his refusal of the crown. But a greater event to Cæsar was Calpurnia's lisping *Amo,* conjugating it with her eyes.

Earthquakes, if disasters, are recorded, but far greater are the little quake splits in every springtime giving room for crocuses and violets and hope and love. Autumn too has its wonderful happenings.

Samuel Burrows by law, once Sammy Leaubeau, and to be known to the New York Police as Sam Lobo, was in love. Not, you may say, by right of it, but in hope of it.

For that year and much of the next, time passed not slowly in chapters but with speed in paragraphs.

Readers, you may skip or fill in. You are on your way to the Glory Flats and Rhoda Rhedd.

At the end of the year I left high school and went back to the farm. Rust on wheat and frost on corn and low prices for both and high cost of farm labor reduced farmer capitalists to serfs working to pay interests to banks.

A man went to prison for selling oil stocks of no value to Mrs. Burrows, but a man in prison for robbery returns no money to the robbed. Both Mrs. Burrows and my father worked hard and cheerfully, and I worked

hard, if not cheerfully, by their side. We were but a step ahead of foreclosure of mortgages given for loans now long overdue.

The Reverend George Stuart in his Chapel Car, and carrying Suzanne, rolled out into North Dakota. Paul of the prairies imitating the Apostle Paul of the hills and seas. He shot light into dark places. He planted seed but did not wait for harvest. He followed the call of the hungry up into Canada and out over the Rocky Mountains and toward the ocean and then by steam and sea to an island in the South Pacific Seas.

"Daddy likes it," wrote Suzanne, "and I like to be with him. Rome is Roam and father is Paul."

Suzanne's father was killed in battle on the plains of ancient Thessalonia, but that I didn't know until many years after when I was in Sing Sing Prison.

I am looking at the word "ancient." Should I say ancient plains or ancient Thessalonia? I wish I could see Maline. We say ancient Babylon. Is Alaska less ancient or for that matter the North Pole?

While on the farm Suzanne's letters came often and to her I wrote much oftener. Seed under ground but growing, pushing secretly down for strength.

CHAPTER XXX

I AM ORDERED EAST

IN OCTOBER came the letter from Rhoda Rhedd at night. A farmer brought it to me from Glyndon post-office. I showed it to Mr. and Mrs. Burrows and late we sat and talked. My mother was in tears and her husband comforted her. My father's voice broke and my mother comforted him. We were agreed that I should go, and go at once.

There was no money in the house to take me to New York but we were able to load, in the early morning, potatoes which I would take to Moorhead. The money the potatoes would bring, added to what was owing us at the store, would give me nearly seventy dollars.

In the morning we read the letter again at early breakfast by lamplight:

"Your mother is back in Auburn Prison. With you to help we can get her pardoned. If you come at once. I was pardoned out myself and am just back to the Glory Flats, West Thirty-first Street. You and me and you and me only can turn the trick. Ask for Rhoda Rhedd.

"Torello is in the city playing his fool head off, but it was him who got your mother's parole revoked so naturally he don't give her a rumble. A lawyer named Goldfarb can get your mother out. He wants a thousand

dollars and I can show you how to get it and get it quick and easy and safe."

Immediately after breakfast Mrs. Burrows packed my clothes into a big yellow valise which Mr. Burrows had brought west from Vermont. My father and I hitched the horses. We were soon ready. The sun had risen cold but bright.

We chose to say "good-by" in my bedroom, and in that little room my father gave me his watch and Mrs. Burrows a locket picture.

Brant and geese were already honking south, low to the ground under the rising wind. It was time to go, and to those two fine people and their name I said good-by. A farmer had agreed to bring back the horses on a "hitch."

Down the hard road I rumbled; Mr. and Mrs. Burrows waving until I turned sharply to the right for Moorhead, Saint Paul and the Glory Flats, Blackwell's Island and Sing Sing Prison.

Turning back I saw the two Burrows walking slowly, and arm in arm. Unable to comfort each other they were going to the little square bed of their own children. Turning once more I saw them kneeling. Many things were to happen before I would see them again—if I was to see them ever.

I knew that my mother was back in prison. But the reason I was not to know for more than six months. Were I the mere teller and survivor of this story, and not as well what might be called one of the principal characters, I would wait and let you hear, as I heard, the story of her flight from Italy and her subsequent arrest, from

my mother herself as given to me in whispers and in tears through a steel meshed screen in Auburn Prison. The news is what befell my mother as it befell, and not the effect of the occurrence upon me. Narrations are three-style. "I saw" or "I heard" or "it happened." There is indirect discourse. "Dumnorix said to Cæsar that he would—" And there is direct discourse. "Bre'r Fox, 'sezee' and Bre'r Rabbit, 'sezee.'" For a paragraph or two let it be "it happened," and in the direct discourse.

For the hundredth time Torello pleaded to his wife that he was wedded to his art. They were in Amalfi where the signor was billed to play his violin. The wedding to his art Anne did not question, but other things were unbearable.

While Torello played his notes Anne, moving quickly, went by motor to Paris and thence to Cherbourg. In her red morocco wallet she carried a picture of her illegal son, Sammy, a boy whom she believed to be in Glyndon, Minnesota, legalized as Samuel Burrows.

From Cherbourg she sailed and upon arrival in New York she went to the Grand Central Station. She was standing at a ticket window while the route to Glyndon was being ascertained and the fare for a ticket was being computed. Nervously she waited. Within the half-hour a fast train would start for Chicago. The ticket agent was now stamping and writing and Anne was ready with her open wallet and a sheaf of bills in American money.

Not far behind her and walking in half-circles of fast diminishing radius was Detective Michael Genaro of the Italian Squad, New York Detective Bureau. In his hand was a photograph of Anne and buttoned in his pocket close to his ribs and under his shield was a cablegram from the great Torello.

"Thank you. Thank you tremendously," said Anne Torello to the ticket agent. She put her ticket in her wallet in a compartment close to Sammy.

Then walked forward Detective Genaro. "You were to stay in Italy, Fingers," he said, "and for violation of parole I arrest you. Turn in your ticket."

"Do I have to go back to Italy?" Anne asked, trembling little as she could.

"You are not going to Italy," Genaro said, "for Torello don't want you."

"Thank God," said my mother.

"For violation of parole you have got to go back to Auburn Prison," said Genaro, "and finish out all your time."

He shouldered his way to the window. "Say, Cap, do the Southwest Limited stop at Syracuse?"

"Yes," said the agent. "You got twenty minutes."

My mother refused to go with Genaro unless he produced the order returning her to prison but that was a matter of a moment for the cunning Genaro, and the next morning, perhaps in the same uniform which she had worn before, my mother ate her breakfast on a backless bench in Auburn. Parole violators are supposed to have received a boon and proved themselves unworthy; to have bitten the hand that fed them.

She doubtless told her story to an ever-widening circle of listeners and listened in turn to theirs, Rhode Island Red's among them. Whatever the beautiful Rhoda had done to subject her to prison confinement was probably palliated if not justified by her version of the crime, and when she received her pardon she became a trusted agent to communicate with me in my mother's behalf.

CHAPTER XXXI

SIGNOR TORELLO

"NEW York! All out."

I was on the front end of the line of day-coach travelers. Ahead of us important yellow porters carrying important yellow and shiny black luggage of generals, colonels, majors and captains of industry with their domestic staffs of wives and nurses and maids, some walking slowly with little children running swiftly by their side. This vanguard of luxury, I remember, plunged me into a mood that was near to anarchy. Perhaps this very day all the product of the cold long days of Mr. and Mrs. Burrows were being sold under the hammer of foreclosure.

Unmet I watched the greetings of others and wormed my way through Grand Central group receptions out into Forty-second Street and a place where I could wash and eat. With my anarchy washed away and fed away I paid the cashier.

"You forgot to take a toothpick," said the little girl who took my dollar bill.

"You keep it for me," I answered. I didn't want to be rural.

"Sure I will," said the girl, putting a small piece of white pine timber in her mouth, waving it in two planes like a semaphore.

I pocketed my change and with the bag that Joseph Burrows had bought in Vermont and carried west, I started to walk to the Glory Flats in West Thirty-first Street.

I went to the desk. The clerk was drowsy, and early morning scrub women were drinking from a bottle and collecting their mops and pails and brushes.

"I have an appointment," I said, "to see Miss Rhedd, Miss Rhoda Rhedd."

"She ain't in," said the clerk, "and she ain't been in." He studied me for a moment and then asked, "Are you the rube she's expecting?"

"I had an appointment," I answered, my fingers twitching to close on the sport-collar throat in front of me.

"I get you," he drawled, "but Rhode Island ain't in."

He took a bit of paper from the mail rack behind him. With his eye on the paper he said, "She telephoned in three A. M. this morning and said if a guy from the sticks asks for her to tell him to leave his bag in her room and show here at seven to-night to the minute." He reached for the bag and I gave it to him.

Again he eyed me narrowly. "Key to her room, if you want it. Tub and shower and a chance to sleep. Want to go up?"

"No, thanks," I said. "I have plenty of things to see. I'm an old New Yorker."

"I'll say you are," he said. "You be here at seven?"

"To the minute," I replied.

On my way into the street I heard the clerk say, "Front! Take this gentleman's 'kick' up to Rhedd's room. Sixty-nine."

I turned to ask that my bag be left where it was, but I hesitated and the elevator had soon cut from view the yellow valise which Mr. Burrows had bought in Vermont and taken west with his wife.

The elevator looked and sounded as if it did nothing but rest by day and at night carry wickedness from floor to floor, and the painted walls and ceilings of the lobby, deprived of electric lights, looked like the pale lining of a casket. The white-clothed tables in the dining-room looked like large eyes closed in death.

Leaving the hotel I walked up Seventh Avenue and sat down on the first vacant bench in Central Park.

A man has many advantages over a woman and one of these advantages is public permission to sleep on the day-beds in Central Park.

Men were stretching and waking upon benches only to roll over and sleep again. Others were leaving with early morning bravery on their faces. Still others were waiting to go to bed when desirable beds were vacated.

I sat there for some moments trying to formulate plans. One can hardly plan until he has a starting-point. My starting-point was not to be fixed until seven that night. I did decide, however, to be resolute in anything that I did. In my physical strength and activity I had the greatest confidence. In all other ways I was an abject coward.

Boys from rural districts make valiant soldiers but they are on the field of battle and marching in regiments. Bravery is contagious. The spirit of the country man marching alone on city pavements is not so brave, and if bravery is contagious he is not exposed to it. Plans, like eggs, are not hatched where they are laid, and I was between the laying and the cracking of the shell.

I was not afraid of anything particular happening, but I was shakily afraid of what was going to happen. If a man is in the dark and can not see he can feel his way and if he can not feel he can listen, and lack of sound means safety. With respect to events to come I could neither see, feel nor listen.

I left my bench and walked south on Seventh Avenue. On the walls of Carnegie Hall on Fifty-seventh Street were dignified advertisements announcing the appearance that afternoon and evening of Signor Giuseppe Torello. I walked back to the Park and again sat down on a bench.

Why should I not appeal to Torello to help my mother? I felt certain that he must be earning large sums of money and equally certain that a great violinist, if properly approached, would love to do an honorable thing and would feel it to be injurious to his heart if he did a dishonorable thing.

Then it occurred to me that he would say, "Who are you?"

My imaginary dialogue ran like this, "I am the son of your wife."

"But are you my son?"

"No, not yours."

"Whose?"

"A man's."

"If it hadn't been for you your mother would now be with me."

"Am I my own fault?"

"Yes."

With this dialogue and many others I engaged myself in dreams until the sun was high in the sky. At the conclusion of some of these talks I struck Torello in the

face and was arrested by a near-by policeman. Sometimes I struck him in the face and escaped without arrest, but at all times I was Torello's reason for not returning to his wife and at no time did Torello say, "I will see what I can do." I rubbed my eyes to dislodge and fumigate the immediate past.

Leaving the Park I crossed over to Fifth Avenue and walked to Twenty-second Street and then east to Gramercy Park. With my eyes close to the iron picket fence I watched the little boys and the little girls playing games; little girls frankly seeking popularity and little boys avoiding it. From there I walked down-town, on to the Bowery and through Great Jones Street. Then back to the Bowery and down to Chatham Square.

Chatham Square is a pool; on the east banks hope, success and ability. Al Smith, later governor of New York, lived in Oliver Street, and on the other side of the pool is Chinatown. The banks on that side are poisonous marshes and full of quick sand. Out of this quicksand rose Irving Berlin to the tune of *Alexander's Ragtime Band.* Later he wrote *What'll I Do.* Chinatown, the home of the fallen, sings "What will I do" at night and in the daytime answers "Nothing."

To Gramercy Square and Great Jones Street I went to renew the acquaintance not of people but of buildings. Why did I go to Chinatown? Not to renew acquaintances of people or of buildings, because I had never been there before. Why *did* I go? That is one of the questions of Chinatown. What will I do and why did I come? Chinatown is a vacuum sucking softly for the undetermined. For me it was my first visit, but I came again and had part of a room and a bed in Mott Street.

In a chop suey place in Doyers Street, not far from Nigger Mike's old place in Pell Street, I got something to eat and a cup of coffee. Bright-eyed women, very bright-eyed, rustled by me, jostling me with their eyes.

Out into Mott Street, I went, and across Mulberry Park. The sun was beating down on the black and yellow joss houses. Chinatown had scarcely rolled over. Central Park has a clock and Chinatown has none, yet like owl, wolf and weasel it practises night-light saving.

I went through Franklin Street, past the Tombs and under the Bridge of Sighs, with the walls of justice on my right. The judge who had sentenced my mother, on his way to work, was climbing from his car. I thought of the Jukes, with terror, but the thought of Suzanne dispersed them, and hopefully on lower Broadway I followed that greatest of all roads, leading north and squirming and warping to the west.

For a moment I stopped at the Glory Flats. Frescoed women with but one coat of paint were having breakfast-lunch with their well-kept lovers. A large bus was waiting at the side-door entrance to take to the race track those who were out of bed. An emulsion of perfumery and smoke lay close to the tables like a fog on plowed ground, and through the fog moved waiters with food and tips on horses.

In this streak of life there is no form of hypocrisy. In most places if a woman paid the check for food her male escort would feel, for the moment at least, that he was degraded. In public at least he should be permitted to be fiscal agent. In the Glory Flats, however, if the woman did not pay for the meal the "man" would feel

thoroughly ashamed and disgraced; a public admission that his personality was insufficient to get a woman to work for him.

Of this blind devotion from a childless woman to her unmarried man I may speak on later pages—or I may not. Great sacrifices are made by little people and by the great, but of the little people the evil deeds only are recorded.

I say this not with a knowledge that I possessed on that murky day in the Glory Flats, but rather in the future-perfect experience of years to come.

We classify the inhabitants of earth. Caucasian, Malay and some others. Then the rich, the poor. The male, the female. The sick, the well. The law-abiding, the criminal. These occur to me and others to you, but there is only one worth while. The happy, the unhappy. Contentment serene and white. Everything else is black, yellow and sick and criminal. Sex, color and pocketbook fall into line. You are in heaven, or you are in hell. Is there any reason to believe that if you are in hell on earth, you will be in heaven elsewhere?

When I again crossed Fifty-seventh Street many women and some men were sucked rapidly into the front entrance of Carnegie Hall, while the eye-curious were thronged close to the back stage entrance in Fifty-sixth Street. I placed myself in the latter group.

Preceded by two policemen on motorcycles and flanked by club-wavers, came slowly a magnificent automobile, Belasco-black, and out of it a handsome man carrying in one hand a soft black hat and in the other a violin case by the neck. Behind him a woman, not old, her eyes faded into palest larkspur and under them pockets of

indigo, rained on, the color running. The man I knew to be Torello and the woman his musical idolatress. Into the building they disappeared, a heavy door covered with sheet-iron closing behind them.

I returned to the front entrance on Fifty-seventh Street, and for seventy-five cents I bought a ticket which allowed me to sit high and far back in the second balcony. Around me sat sad-eyed American women and joyous Italian fruit dealers who wore flowing ties and corduroy clothes and exuded not unpleasantly the odors of the merchandise which they sold. Below the orchestra played slowly and lazily and stopped. I could not see the players but only the center and rear of the stage. From below came clapping of hands and around me was a waving of handkerchiefs, colored and white, as men with gold rings in their ears stood on their seats and cried, "Bravo, bravo, Torell'!"

I too stood on my seat and far down I could see Torello standing proudly in the center of the stage. He advanced close to the lights and I could see only his black hair, close-brushed, his handsome face and his neck around which he wore a low white collar and a flowing black tie. To the center of the house Torello bowed his head, and then to the right of him and then to the left of him, and then dropping to the rear of the stage and raising high in one hand his violin and in the other his bow he gazed a Corsican welcome to his compatriots in the cheaper seats.

The clamor about me redoubled. "Bravo!" "Torello!" "Gooda Joe!" *"Bravissimo!"* Here and there in a frantic effort to gain attention some bull-necked banana man shouted, "Joe! Joe! Joe!"

Cuddling his violin Torello weaved obligingly forward and the song of his violin, rising to the ceiling, fell gently upon us from above. No longer could I see the man for whom my mother's heart had beaten so fiercely, but his trembling music gathered like a mist and fell upon our heads in trickling drops of beautiful sound.

Torello backed up the stage, his head inclined forward and slightly sidewise, as if listening impatiently for notes that didn't come. Then suddenly as if saying to the violin, "There it is, at last," he threw back his head triumphantly and gleefully accepted the salvos of applause. Again he played, and again, and once more.

The last was best. Some bit of a wandering soul asking the violin to tell its story. Beseeching, twittering and never-say-dying it leaped over mountain to find there was nothing there, and came home to a rippling brook. When the violin stopped, the soul was at peace and said so.

I stood as one bound by a spell. In heart I was awe-struck but my mind told me clearly that this much applauded performance was nothing but cat-gut; a bow with resin and an Italian adventurer with long fingers not afraid of work, financed by an adulteress.

The American women remained in their seats. The banana men were again in Corsican and Calabrian uproar "Torell'! Torell'! Torell'!" *"Bravissimo,* Joe!"

I walked into the street. "A terrible man with women," I heard a woman say. At that time I didn't know that it was Torello who had caused my mother's arrest or that it was to get away from him and to see me that she had fled to America. For you and, in a book, I can turn pages. If that afternoon I could have turned pages for myself I should have waited for Torello. As it was I walked east and south and west.

CHAPTER XXXII

RHODE ISLAND RHEDD AND THE GLORY FLATS

AT SEVEN o'clock to the minute I was at the desk of the Glory Flats and said to the clerk, with such courage as I could, "Mr. Samuel Leaubeau to see Rhode Island Rhedd."

The clerk, without looking up and speaking as to nobody said, "Take this kid to room sixty-nine. If she ain't in her own room she might be to a party in sixty."

"This way, cap," said a colored elevator boy, slowly straightening himself for action.

I was the only passenger in the elevator. The traffic at this hour was down and not up.

On the sixth floor the boy left the elevator suspended and led me to room sixty-nine and knocked on the door. There was no answer.

"That Jane must be in sixty," he muttered. "You wait."

A little farther down the hall he knocked on another door. The door was opened and the boy entered the room and shortly returned to me.

"Miss Rhedd ain't got her clothes on yet," he said, "but she give me a key and you can wait in here. Miss Rhedd says you got a letter." He opened the door of room sixty-nine and followed me in.

In a corner of the room I saw my yellow bag, and in another corner, on a desk, pens and paper and ink. On the walls were a number of nude figures. Some were drawings and some were seemingly photographs, the faces modestly covered with the subjects' hands.

I have not infrequently seen reproductions of photographs on pages or on covers where the hands should be similarly employed.

Near the window in a gilt cage was a canary, shoulders up as if he expected rain or a bottle or something. On a mantel was a gilt clock and on a stand near the bed a telephone instrument, propped against which was an envelope.

"This letter is for you," said the colored boy. He handed me the envelope and when I took it he kept his hand extended.

"Shake it up, boss," he said, "a little change. Get me, bo?"

I had very little money and so I said, "For what?"

With an unfinished curse and using a dirty verb as a vocative noun the boy left the room, slamming the door behind him. I had made an enemy, an enemy with an unsuspected capacity for evil.

The envelope was addressed to me in the care of Rhoda Rhedd and in the handwriting of my mother. I opened the envelope with my knife and read:

My Sammy dearest and own:

Mother hates to do this but she can't stay here much longer and live. Rhoda will tell you how to get a thousand dollars. Do what she says but you better see Goldfarb first. He is the lawyer who gets people pardoned. He is said to be very eloquent—if, of course, he has the thousand first. Rhoda knows who your father

is. I won't permit you to ask him for anything. Just take it away from him. If you feel that you ought not to do it put the question this way: "Ought I to leave my mother to die in prison?" I have known you and I know your answer. You will say, "I want her out and living with me."

One word more. You are a good boy from the country and Rhoda only knows rats in the city. Her kind loves your kind. So watch and keep good.

Don't fail me, Sammy. You will have to go back on your bringing up, but you can never be happy with me left up here.

Lovingly, hopefully,
Your mother.

I refolded the letter and replaced it in my pocket, but the pocket seemed hardly the place. I opened my valise and put the letter under some shirts. Then I picked up a pen and started:

"Dearest and only Suzanne—"

So far as I knew this room had only one door, but another door or what sounded like a door opened immediately behind me and before I could turn I felt the soft cheek of Rhode Island Red against my own.

"Who is Suzanne?" she lisped, as I shook myself free from an enveloping arm.

"Your sweetheart? Is she, Sammy? Suzanne? I am Rhoda Rhedd. *We* can work. You and I are going to get your mother out of prison. Cop a thousand off of your dad."

"When do we start?" I asked.

"Very soon. May take some time—may not. Your dad is awful cooney, but he's awful strong on topic number one."

"What am I to do and when shall I meet you?"

"Meet me?" she inquired wonderingly, "you have met me and you are here, aren't you?"

"I mean," I stumbled, "when shall I come back?"

"You're not going to leave me, dearie." And Rhode Island Red fixed upon me eyes which many would call beautiful and all would call determined. Her red lips were gathered tight as if to shut off a rush of words.

I reached for my unfinished letter to Suzanne and put it in my pocket and, crossing the room, I picked up my bag and again asked, "When and where shall I meet you?"

"You don't know yet," said Rhode Island Red, "what you are to do. I haven't told you that."

"Would it get me a thousand dollars?" I asked. "Would a thousand dollars get my mother out?"

"Just as sure," she answered, "as opening the door of that cage would let the canary out."

"Then I will do anything to get the thousand dollars."

She stared at me for some time and then said slowly, "You don't look old enough hardly to play the part of an outraged husband, but," she mused slowly, "if you say you are one and have a gun in your hand it doesn't make much difference. There will be very little light in the room and not much time for thinking."

The expected words from me were not ready and after some moments of silence she said, "I'll tell you what I'll do, Sammy. I'll change my dress and we'll go down to dinner in the hotel here. At dinner I can explain to you what you will have to do. I was only joking about the outraged husband. Will you, like a dear, turn your back for a moment while I change my clothes?"

"If you don't mind," I said, "I'll be waiting for you in the hall or down-stairs." I walked toward my valise.

"Very well," she said. "My precious, you leave your bag here and after dinner I'll ask the clerk to give you a separate room—the next one to mine is always vacant for you."

"If you don't mind," I said, "I would rather have a separate hotel. I haven't very much money and I am afraid that this place is too expensive."

"All right then, after dinner we'll have to find something cheaper," said Rhoda. "Is your bag locked?" she added carelessly.

"No," I said. "It has no key but it contains nothing but my best suit of clothes, some best shirts and some nightshirts, brushes, toothpowder and stuff like that."

"It will be safe here," she said, "and we'll get it after dinner—if you still feel the way you feel now. Beat it while I doll up."

I seated myself on a bench near the elevator shaft. The wicked little elevator shuttled up and down carrying cargoes of two.

Why, I wondered, did this woman want to get my mother out of prison? Was the plan proposed by my mother or by Rhode Island Red?

Whatever my thoughts or whatever my attempts to answer these questions, I was sure that I had never felt so sorry for my mother, that I had never loved her more and that I would do anything to raise a thousand dollars to get her free and a few more dollars to take care of her until I could get a job that would support her.

The letter to Suzanne, I made up my mind, I wouldn't finish until my mother was free. One job at a time,

and proposed criminal action in behalf of my mother did not go well with telling Suzanne how much I loved her. I tried to tell myself that Suzanne if she knew would say, "Get that thousand. It's the only thing to do, but don't get caught." My mother was right when she wrote that I would have to go back on my bringing up to get a thousand dollars, but my love for her was intense and unexpected circumstances were somewhat to modify or neutralize the effects of my bringing up.

Rhode Island Red came out dressed in black lace. She seized my arm and I hardened the muscles against her fingers as we walked to the elevator.

"How strong you are," said Red. "How strong are you?"

"I am kind of strong," I stammered.

We entered the elevator.

"Don't stop for others," said Rhode Island Red.

"Always express for you, ma'am," the elevator boy replied.

We entered the dining-room and were seated at a table at which there were five chairs.

Rhode Island Red said, "You had better let me order." And then to the waiter, "Bring five regular dinners, two martini cocktails right away and a round of five more as soon as the other people come." The waiter gave her a wise nod and went away.

"Do you know who your father is?" Rhode Island Red asked, placing her elbows upon the table. "Your real father? You do, don't you?"

"I can truthfully say that I don't," I said.

"And I can truthfully say that I do," Rhode Island smiled, "and I know him very well and I know an old

girl of his and what he gave her. I doubt if there is a stone in that Jane's flat that is worth less than a thousand dollars."

"Who are the three people coming?" I asked.

"Friends of mine," she replied, "jazbos I'm sick of."

"Have they been——" I hesitated a moment. "Have they been locked up where you have?"

"Certainly not," said Rhode Island Red. "The people coming are men and they haven't been anywhere else. I've got no time for birds. It's hicks like you that I have a yen for." She started a rippling laugh but stopped to receive the cocktails. She placed them on the table.

"Here goes mine," she said. "If you don't want yours, Sammy, say so like a man or take it like a man." She handed me the cocktail and I took it, whether like a man or not I don't know.

"What were you in prison for?" I asked.

"I knew you'd come to that. I was born in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. High-school stuff. I was ruined willingly and came to New York. A man—a married man—was found dead in his rooms and I was tried for it. I had been in love with him and he had shook me for a Jane in the front row. If I love a guy and he don't love me I'll do him. The jury found me guilty of a marked-down bargain degree of manslaughter. They didn't think the man who was killed amounted to much. That a married man who mixes up with a woman not his wife has to take his chances. The judge said so in so many words, and besides all of the jury asked for clemency and the judge give me three years. Some of my friends got Goldfarb, the counselor, to take the case up in Albany. You put a thousand dollars in Abie's

hand and he can sing the birds out of a tree, and in my case Abie had a damned good song to sing, so you see I am here. 'Course I got a police record hanging on me, but you were born in a cell yourself and you got to be one of us. You can't get away from it, and my tip is don't try. Love me a little and let me love you a lot. Will you do that, Sammy? Let me try loving. I'm tired, sick and gone to the races on being loved by jazbos."

At that moment three snake-looking men ranged themselves behind the three vacant chairs. One of them just finishing the same story in city language which I had heard with rural touches in Pukker's store.

"Will you, Sammy?" Rhode Island Red whispered again. "You just a little and me love you a lot?"

"Give me the key to your room. I want to get my bag," I said.

"But what about your mother?" Rhode Island Red asked. "Let her stew? Are you going to do that?"

"I'll go up and see the governor myself," I said bravely. "If a lawyer could sing a woman like you out of prison I don't believe I'll have much trouble in talking a woman like my mother out." I was confused and my words stumbled, but I stood erect and again demanded the key.

"You better not quarrel with this red one," one of the men whispered to me and winked.

"If you do you'll get second money," said another.

"Not at all. If you want your bag I'll get it for you," said Rhode Island Red, and turning to one of the men continued, "Take this key, Joe, and go up to room sixty-nine and bring down the young gentleman's bag which you will find on the floor in a corner."

"I'll do that," said the creature called Joe. But before he left the room Rhoda drew his head close to her mouth and whispered. It was not uncommon in this dining-room for a woman to impart a confidence by spraying it into the listener's ear, and the fact of Rhoda's whispering seemed then of little importance.

"You rats take the air," said Rhoda to the two remaining males, "while I try to get some sense into this nice boy's head."

She turned to a near-by waiter, "Slim," said she, "please serve these gentlemen at another table. Leave the check with me."

The males seated themselves at the table next but one, and "Slim" moved some dishes from our table to theirs.

How could I see the governor myself? Could I see Mr. Garrison or Lanny? Could Tim Sullivan help? Would Goldfarb, the lawyer, let me pay him his fee in weekly installments with interest? Perhaps I ought to go to Auburn and see my mother—if I could—and get her advice. Why didn't the boy return with the bag? Slim was moving the dishes slowly, and I could see people at other tables looking at me and talking. One remark I heard. "That's the kid what was born in a cell." And another, "I know, Fingers' kid." And another, "Rhode'll run him ragged."

Speaking deliberately and sometimes whispering, Rhoda began, "Don't cut in on me. Listen me through and then if you don't like it we'll try something else."

I drank a glass of water but with my throat still dry I said, "I'll listen you through. Go ahead."

Rhoda set her elbows on the table and began. "Your

father I can easy make. An easy guy to date. Now you'll know where I take him—not here but a dead swell place—and if I get him laying right along side of me have you got the guts to smash in the door and pull the husband stuff? You get me? No? You say you're my husband and call me rotten names," Rhoda continued. Here Rhoda offered some sample "names," in various combinations such as——. (People whose judgment I respect are against the publication of the least offensive name.)

"I'll cry. You say you'll divorce me, but you are damned hard up—lay it to the race track—the language we'll fix up—and you want a couple a thousand on the spot. He'll say he hasn't got it. All right. Then you say you'll shoot us both and then yourself—pull your gat—your gun—I've got one up-stairs—and then I scream and take a blank check out of a drawer and he fills it in to cash and you take it to the bank and I keep him tethered to the feathers until you ring me back and say you've got the cash. He'll squawk and hold back but believe me he'll come through. A thousand for Goldfarb and a thousand for us and lots more of the same in other places. You can fix a wonderful place for your mother to come home to, Sam. Up where she is it's awful. When I left she was skipping beats, and stairs she couldn't climb at all. Now you talk, Sammy. And eat up. You ain't said a word or touched food. Are you off it? Or will you come along and give it a ride?"

My answer to Rhoda I had composed before she had half finished her nasty plan. "With going into a bedroom," I answered, "the way you said, I'll have nothing to do, but you show me my father and I'll hold him

up with a revolver and demand a thousand dollars and if he doesn't give it to me I'll crack him on the head and take it."

"Hick stuff," said Rhoda. "Men who have money don't carry a thousand dollars in their kick. He'd ask you to meet him somewhere to get the money and you'd walk into the arms of the flies. It's my way or it's no way. Besides you said a thousand. Goldfarb will want that much and then how about us?"

"Us!" I said.

"Sure, how are *we* going to live?"

"When I get my mother out of prison," I answered, "I am going back where I came from and take her with me."

"Like hell you are," said Rhoda. "Where do you come in to get that way?" Sliding far down in her chair she seized my knees with hers. I drew away.

Through the open door I saw the colored boy to whom earlier in the evening I had refused a tip. In his hand he carried my yellow bag. "My bag has come," I said, pushing back my chair.

"I don't like the way you're hurrying," she said loudly, as she followed me into the lobby with a pack of diners at her heels. "Take this letter from your mother," she shrieked. "I found it on the floor. 'Watch and keep good.' I only know rats! Great, isn't it, and you a workhouse bastard." She stuffed the letter into my handkerchief pocket as I took my bag and started for the street door.

"Ike," she said to the colored boy, "open up this gent's kick just to be dead sure he ain't got anything that ain't his."

"Yes, ma'am," said Ike. He reached for my bag.

"No, you won't," I shouted, now fearing that I had been "planted." I shot one blow to the body to straighten him up and one to the jaw to drop him cold. This thinking my fists did, leaving the brain clear for more fighting and the escape to follow. The bell boy went down in a heap, but over and above my shoulder I saw a heavy-capped whisky bottle descending, and under its crash I crumpled and with head dizzy and hands helpless, I spiraled to the floor.

"Attaboy," I could hear. Then the low tones of Rhoda as I was being lifted up, "I'll love this martin when he comes off the Island. Jesus, wasn't we all good once!"

Over my neck and shoulder blood warmer than my skin was flowing. A prize-fighter stuck a lock of my hair into a gash in my scalp and the blood on my face was hard and rusty black when I washed in the police station before going to a cell.

CHAPTER XXXIII

I AM "PLANTED"

NEXT morning when I was taken from the Thirtieth Street Station House to Jefferson Market Police Court I was no longer bleeding and my head was clear, and I stepped quickly out of line when some clerk in the courtroom called, "Samuel Leaubeau." To the judge he said, and in a lower tone as he handed him a paper, "Larceny charge, Your Honor—bad kid—short case—found with the stuff on him."

Easy a thing to do as stealing must be, the proof of a theft is very much easier.

The magistrate peered over the top of the written complaint which he held in his hand, looking at me curiously while a detective refreshed his memory. He nodded reminiscently.

"Yes," he muttered. "I held his mother once for trial. Fingers, they called her. Essex Market, I think it was,—or perhaps it was Yorkville. Better run inside and tip off the newspaper boys."

"They have been tipped," said the clerk, and in trailed the group of young reporters while the magistrate stiffened himself with importance.

"Glory Flats," one of the reporters said yawningly to the judge.

"Oh, yes," the magistrate replied learnedly if carelessly, "but when thieves fall out——"

"I am not a thief," I said, "and I can prove it."

"Which is," said the judge, "the intent and purpose of court-houses."

"Wise crack," a reporter said. The judge was again reading the complaint.

"He's always making wise cracks," said the clerk.

"Got a lawyer?" the judge asked.

"No, sir," I said. "I have very little money, and use for it all, and besides I don't need one."

"Ready to go ahead then, now? For examination? That means trial. Means whether I hold you for the Grand Jury."

"Yes, sir, I am ready."

"First witness," said the magistrate to a spectacled prosecutor. "Call your first witness."

A stoutish woman took the stand and simultaneously an oath to tell the truth, reaching automatically for a Bible, but in police courts this little book is not used. She was asked her name and answered, "Rosa Warlich." Her residence, she said, was the "Glory Flats temporary." Her occupation she refused to give but added with a simper, "Whatever I am I can be stolen from just like your wife could be stolen from, Judge."

"Not much could be stolen from *my* wife," the magistrate rejoined, "on the salary we judges get." And before the laughter had died down Mrs. Warlich had examined a lapful of brushes, combs, files and scissors with tortoise shell backs or yellow handles, and had sworn piece by piece that they were hers.

"That's mine. That's mine. That's mine. Gift from

a gentleman that used once to keep me. I was out of luck at the races and had left the toilet set with my friend Miss Rhedd to sell if she could get my 'figger.' I had refused five hundred dollars and the stuff would melt down for three hundred if it was junked." She left the stand and walked majestically out of court.

A policeman testified that he was present when my bag was opened. "These are the articles and this is the valise. Yes, I personally took them out one by one behind the desk in the Glory Hotel which is known as the Glory Flats. The Glory Flats is in the city, county and state of New York. The time was night-time. I placed the defendant under arrest." He left the stand, but loitered near by to see that the result of his police activity was not abortive.

Ike, the colored boy, testified. "I took this here old satchul to room sixty-nine. I seen it opened and it was then shirts, socks and a suit of clothes. Nothing else. I knew that kid was no good when I seen him. Young thieves never give no tips."

"Strike out 'young thieves,'" the magistrate said to the stenographer, "and call the next witness."

"The people rest. That's our case," the prosecutor said.

To me the magistrate said, "You can testify if you so desire, and if you do not do so your failure to testify can not be used against you."

"I want to testify," I said, and I went around as I had seen others do and sat in the witness chair. I was sworn to tell the truth.

"Well?" said the magistrate.

"I took none of those things."

"Were you ever in room sixty-nine of the Glory Hotel?" the magistrate asked, glancing at a typewritten paper before him.

"Yes, I was."

"Did you know it was a hangout for thieves?"

"I thought it was, yes, sir."

"Did you know that Rhoda Rhedd was a notorious criminal?"

"She told me that she had been in prison, yes, sir."

"Why did you happen—how came it that you went to see her?"

"Why did I?"

"Certainly. Don't repeat my questions. Answer them. Or say you can't."

"Well," I replied slowly, "that question I can't answer."

"Why not?"

"I mean I won't answer it. To do so would hurt the chances of —— I won't answer it. I can't."

The courtroom audience moved as people move when the end of a play is obvious. The magistrate turned a paper on his desk, and a pen was dipped and handed him.

"Have you ever been in prison before?" he said, as if habit and memory were plucking at his sleeve to remind him of a great omission.

"No, sir," I said, "and the reason I can't answer why I went to see that Rhedd woman is a reason you would respect."

"Will you answer?"

"No, sir, I won't."

Some woman, a court officer, was whispering in the magistrate's ear.

"Never been in prison before?" he repeated.

"No, sir, and I'm not there yet."

"I am afraid you are awfully close to it, my young friend," the judge said as he wrote and mumbled, "two thousand dollars for trial." He tossed the paper to the policeman and added, "I want defendants in this court to speak the truth or to say nothing," as he wrote me off his mind.

"The Constitution allows a prisoner to remain mute but not to be a liar. Not in my court. A born liar."

"Next case," roared a clerk. "Eyes," dusky and defiant, toddled to the bar.

"Yas, sir, I done been takin' hop—" Eyes was saying. "Yuh see, Your Honor, right after I was pardoned I done my bes', my very bes' and ——" The detective led me from the room to a police wagon and I was taken to police headquarters to be finger-printed before going to the Tombs.

CHAPTER XXXIV

I GET SIX MONTHS

I WASHED the sticky printer's ink from my fingers in cold water and with gritty soap.

Sometimes when passing Cooper Union on our way to Great Jones Street my mother used to quote:

> Lives of great men all remind us
> We can make our lives sublime,
> And departing, leave behind us
> Footprints on the sands of time.

With fingers in ink, my prints were being examined by a humped-over police clerk with a magnifying-glass to find the loops, tents and arches.

He looked up and asked, "How do you spell your name?"

"L-e-a-u-b-e-a-u," I answered, spelling slowly so as not to falter.

"Pretty water in French," said a weasel-faced interpreter.

"It ain't pretty water around here," said the clerk. Turning toward me he continued, "It looks to me, kid, like we're going to see you here often. Born in a cell and you go beatin' it right back to where you come from. You had your chance. Why didn't you stay out west? I'm going to begin right now to save the criminal authorities a lot of writing. L-o-b-o is your name, kid. The name is Lobo. Easy to write."

"So he is the one that Fingers Annie unloaded in a cell to Blackwell's," said the interpreter. "Guess I'll slip over to the Gem and get the entries." He strolled through the basement door into Cleveland Place, and I was bundled into a patrol wagon and taken down to the city prison known as the Tombs.

I was the last prisoner to enter the wagon, and was seated near the rear step. To prevent my escape, and also his, I was handcuffed to Peg-Leg O'Brien, a wrinkled, elderly man with beady eyes and far less forehead than an ape. He had a wooden "leg" which looked like a baseball bat inverted. A fringe of trousers flapped about the knee. When he "blew" his nose, which was often, or scratched his head, which was oftener, my hand was raised with his. A negro sitting opposite, whispered to a fellow-prisoner. "Stump-leg" and "that old gorilla" was all that I could hear. Perhaps Peg-Leg heard more, for, bracing himself against the side of the wagon, he placed the small end of his bat-like wooden leg against the pit of the stomach of the jovial negro and corkscrewed him into silence.

In the courtyard of the Tombs we were taken out and were allowed to walk around in the fresh morning air. There was a moment or two before my handcuff was removed and in that moment Peg-Leg remained stationary while the other prisoners limbered their joints.

"Don't hire a lawyer," he said to me. "Whatever they got you for they'll hang on you. If you got any loose change send it to your mother or your sister or your girl." He looked at me real narrowly and added with a leer, "If you are old enough to have one."

In Glyndon girl meant sweetheart; in the courtyard

of the city prison it means something else. But for that matter so does sweetheart.

Peg-Leg showed less character in his face than he did in his wooden leg, which at least was carved with fancy figures. The scars in his face were carved by others, while the fancy figures carved on his leg were of his own design and execution.

"If I had a good sharp jackknife," said Peg-Leg, "I could pass my time very nice by whittling on my leg, but when I am in prison they take away my knife."

Peg-Leg is not a part of my story and will not appear again.

At ten o'clock one morning I was taken across the Bridge of Sighs and into a courtroom. A clerk shouted a string of words the last of which was "Lobo," and I was pushed forward to a wooden railing. I was dimly conscious that the clerk had called my name.

"Have you counsel?" the judge asked.

I answered, "No."

"Do you want counsel?" he asked.

He was a very kind judge and undoubtedly wanted me to do what was best for my own interest. I hesitated before answering.

"I will assign counsel," the judge answered, smiling at me benignly.

A little chap sprang forward as his name was called, bowing his thanks to the judge as soon as he was within the railing.

"Will the court permit me to confer with my client?"

"Certainly," said the judge. "We will suspend for a moment." The judge then asked a court attendant to go out and get him a plug of tobacco.

"Have you any money?" my newly appointed counsel whispered in my ear.

I said, "No."

"May I examine the papers?" he then asked the judge.

The judge granted permission, and the clerk handed some papers across the table. My lawyer, whose name I later learned was Abrams, snapped the papers open with the same deft motion with which a porter on a Pullman car does a quick change of blankets in an upper berth. He glanced hurriedly at the contents of the paper and without looking up, through a small corner of his mouth, he asked, "Born in the work-house?"

I said, "Yes."

"Better cop a plea," was his reply. He looked at me sharply and asked, "How old are you?"

"Seventeen," I said.

Through the other corner of his mouth he said, "Better say you are twenty-one or the judge will slip you the Reformatory. Besides the Island is in the city and your mother can come and see you once a week."

While waiting for an answer his hawk eyes were roving along the constantly lengthening line of prisoners, his eyes X-raying their pockets. He started forward with the instinct of the chase, but suddenly remembering that he had me in his charge he addressed the court:

"My client desires to enter a plea of guilty, and as the court pleases he is ready for sentence."

"How old?" said the judge.

"He informs me, Your Honor, that he will be twenty-two years next June." To this lie, told professionally, I gave my sanction by silence.

The Court asked Detective Moore to take the stand.

The detective who arrested me dropped himself into the witness chair, removing his shield from a bright yellow suspender and pinning it on the lapel of his coat as he greeted the judge and crossed his legs in the easy manner of an experienced detective.

There was a whispered conversation between the judge and the detective. The judge inclining his head as though it were he and not the officer who was consulting the oracle of criminal wisdom. Shortly their chins moved up and down in unison. Trembling, I grasped the rail in front of me with both hands and held on tight. The detective left the stand, again concealing his shield under his "bib," which equals waistcoat.

Why the criminals select a language of their own I don't know. A heavy overcoat is a "flogger"; a light overcoat is a "benny"; a hat is a "kelly"; and a pocketbook is a "kick," but so also is a valise. "In dutch" was a police expression for many years before it became a plaything of the flapper. "He's got my goat" was current for many years in Chatham Square before it was understood or used up-town.

"Straighten up," said a fat policeman in a wrinkled coat. He jammed his knuckles between my shoulder-blades, and, taking my hands from the rail, I stood erect.

The judge, addressing a spot on the courtroom ceiling, said, "Six months in the penitentiary."

"Say thank you," said my lawyer.

I mumbled my thanks, but the judge's revery was not disturbed. I was hustled down a far aisle and out of the courtroom. When I last saw the judge his eyes were still fixed on the ceiling but a new prisoner had his hands on the railing. The same lawyer was talking in his ear and the same clock was ticking away the early forenoon.

CHAPTER XXXV

JIM DONOVAN

AT HALF past two that afternoon at the foot of Twenty-third Street I was taken aboard a river steamer, the *John J. Brennan.* Our destination was Blackwell's Island. Some twenty prisoners, of both sexes, took passage on the same boat.

Our departure was somewhat delayed while some small pine boxes were brought aboard. The largest of the boxes was three feet long. Looking at them from the ends they were about the size of chalk-boxes in use in the Moorhead High School.

A big black woman with a warty face kicked the ends of one of the boxes and said, "Whoever he is I bet he's glad that he's going on to Potter's Field instead of stoppin' off of where I'm stoppin'."

"Hey, Eyes," called a boat hand from the stern of the boat. "You back?"

"Not yet I ain't back," said the ponderous Eyes, spreading her feet for a wider base and added, "But I'll be on my way back, honey, ef yo'll cover your teeth and loosen them ropes."

Then as her suggestion was followed she sang lurchingly *Roll, Jordan, Roll.*

"Eyes," said the deckhand as he loosed a ratchet, "I

thought you was in the Catskills or the Adirondacks or Auburn or somewhere for bumping off your buck. How about you, hophead?"

"I'se here, ain't I?" said Eyes.

"Two hundred pounds of you, kid."

"Then what is it to yo' where I been. Ain't yo' never heard of pardoning? Yes, suh, they run in black as good as white. Abie Goldfact sprung me."

We were out in the river going north. Eyes was looking hard at me.

"They goin' to dish-rag you with hyoscine or you going to do cold turkey?" persisted the boat hand.

"Cold turkey, nothing doing," said Eyes still staring at me. And then with a wild leap of recognition, like an old dog to a child master she cried, "It's Sammy Fingers," and blind-staggering to the floor, and with a gurgle low in her throat, she said, "It's Fingers' kid going back to where he come from."

Eyes had been drugless for many days. A drinker goes to the floor from too much drink; a drug-user goes to the floor from not enough "snow," "coke," "happy-dust" or "stuff." Eyes was lifted to her feet and led to a place of privacy reserved for her sex.

"Six months," she moaned. "Six months, a sixer for poor old Eyes."

The *Brennan* slowly bucking the tide steamed north for Blackwell's Island, carrying sides and quarters of beef, boxes of canned goods, sacks of onions, bags of potatoes and bags of coffee, and the small boxes of which I spoke. The passengers were burglars, pickpockets, thieves, drug addicts and prostitutes or, in police language, yeggs, dips, guns, cokies and hookers.

We stopped on the south side of the Queen's Bridge. The men and boys left the *Brennan* at the penitentiary dock. We were received by guards who nodded pleasantly to old-timers and gave a hard look to the prisoners whom they had never seen before. I almost wished that I had been a second "offender."

Provisions were trundled off and the *Brennan* continued north with its freight of women for the workhouse a little farther up the Island and its boxes of babies for Potter's Field.

At the prison clothes which had been boiled into a smoky blue were given me; also some shoes, some underwear and a cell number.

In sterilized clothes I marched with others to long tables. Many complained that there was not food enough, that the soup came out of a hydrant and a goat wouldn't touch a thing on the table. I ate but little and was truly glad when I was in my cell and alone. I heard the bolt shooting home for the night, and on the edge of my bunk I sat and tried to think.

What could I write to my mother? She would think of the Jukes and cry. Then I wondered if I would be allowed to write. And Suzanne. I had to tell her something. I hoped that I would not be allowed to write. It would save me from deciding. Not a word had I written to Mr. and Mrs. Burrows who were doubtless driving daily to town in hope of a letter. What could I write? Nothing.

The cell door opened and a keeper entered carrying the yellow valise which Mr. Burrows had carried on his wedding trip into the West. In court it was Peoples' Exhibit A, and now it held the few little things I owned:

a watch, a locket picture of one mother and a photograph of my real mother.

"I'm sorry for you, kid," said the keeper. He put his hand on my shoulder. "We all are sorry—the warden and us. Good night."

My dreams that night I remember were pleasant. I taught wonderful tricks to pigs and pigeons on the Burrows farm.

It was morning and gongs were clanging in every corridor and on every tier. I was on a muddy track but the blood I had inherited from Never-Say-Die was tingling. I would show them yet.

I ate as much breakfast as any one. It was good and I would have eaten more of everything if I could have got it.

I looked down the long line of stooping shoulders and extended chins. To myself I said, "There's a man I'll like. And there's another. And another."

The man sitting next to me I didn't like. His cold gray eyes were motionless and he gripped his knife, fork and spoon with prodigious strength. My forearms, which I had often viewed with satisfaction, would have made suitable wrists for Jim Donovan, known also as Bull Donovan. His breathing was deep and audible. His back was long and, seated, his broad shoulders were higher than mine, but breakfast over, I noticed as we marched out of the hall with Donovan in front of me, that he was unexpectedly short.

Both Donovan and myself were assigned to outdoor heavy work. A road was being built the length of the Island, making a macadam aisle between the old men's home and the old women's home on the north and extend-

ing south down by the workhouse which housed Eyes and female criminals, and then by the penitentiary in which was my own cell and down to the Metropolitan Hospital on the southern end.

North to south the Island is given over to men who are old and poor; to women who are old and poor; to female criminals; to male criminals and last the sick, regardless of sex.

On the road gang Donovan, a half-dozen negroes and myself loaded and unloaded heavy stones which were to serve as curb for the completed road. The crushed stone, the spreading of tar and the rolling of binder was left to the sly and the weak.

Donovan was a safe burglar who had been several times in Sing Sing and was the aristocrat of the Island. An old judge of General Sessions had celebrated the last day before his retirement by a series of reduced sentences and for that reason Jim had been sent to the "pen" instead of back to Hunter Street.

The negroes on our gang were either burglars or highwaymen—stick-up men—and, except for their color, stood high in criminal circles.

I could outlift any one in my squad except Donovan, and on account of my known birthplace had a social standing second to none. Not important you say, perhaps, but there were grades below scorned and scorning; pickpockets, drug addicts, procurers and "fairies."

Where one man belonged to more than one class he was entitled to the higher rank. That is, if a procurer could prove by records, not his mere statement, that he had cracked a safe, he was respected as a burglar. A night burglar was superior to a daytime window wrencher

and a safe man who worked with "soup" (nitroglycerin) was next to a stick-up, the high card.

Donovan was a "safe" man who worked alone and with "soup." He had once been a "stick-up" and in those days his business was to stick-up at three o'clock in the morning "stick-ups" who had done their work earlier in the morning and were on their way home.

Donovan was foreman of our gang. He seldom spoke but gave his orders by gesture of hand or shoulder. Lift, shove or pull. He was a man of moods but I became fond of him, and his friendship for me, God rest his soul, made a sharp twist in the course of my life.

Donovan hated women. "I got a reason for it," he said, "but at that I ain't got no good kick coming. I make a tenement house date with a married Jane. See? Cop's wife engaged to me once, but gets stuck on the cop's uniform and married what's in it. Then warms back to me. Me a plumber's helper. Cop s'posed to be on post. The Jane keeps me wise. Cop takes sick, leaves his post and is opening the hall door just as I walks from the fire-escape platform into the room. The Jane is cool and squawks out 'burglar,' and I gets landed."

His life he gave to me a few words at a time, and I in turn told him much about myself. As I spoke once of the girl I loved he said, "You can win that gal, but you'll never be no good for her till you get your mother out and I'll help you do it."

One afternoon I was unloading stone near the workhouse when the gray pack of workhouse women, walking on new-made road, detoured to avoid the sticky tar that lay before them. Eyes, passing close to me, whispered, "Note from Rhoda Rhedd. I knowed her at

Auburn. Stay close." She pushed a note into my hand, then stooped as though to tie the laces in her barge-like shoe. I quickly put the note in my pocket for written communications were forbidden.

"At Auburn," Eyes mumbled as she made motions near her shoe, "am your pretty little ma. Follow Rhoda Rhedd and your ma comes out. Or you can lay off of Rhoda and leave yo' mammy in." She rose and ambled after her pack.

In my cell I read the letter from Rhoda Rhedd:

Now, dear little hick, that you are not so Ritz, I shall expect you, same place, on the day of your discharge, and the room next to mine will be kept for you. I know your dad and where he is and can make him any time. Goldfarb is ready but he won't sing till he gets his "grand." Dearie, I love you.

RHODA.

"What's a 'grand'?" I asked Jim the next day as we ate dinner out of pails along the roadside.

"A grand," he said, "is a thousand dollars. Why?" I told him entirely the story of me and showed him the note from Rhoda.

"What is your out day?" he asked.

I told him. He was silent for a moment.

"Mine," he said, "comes ten days sooner. I'll let fly a quid of tobacco on the office floor. That's ten days and we go out same day on same boat."

Later while we were working he said, "Kid, you need watching." And an hour later he added, "And I am the bozo to watch."

Toward the close of day he added, "Goldfarb's all

right, and we'll get him the thousand and two or three more. There's more men in prison for understealing than for overdoin'." His words carried conviction.

Jim and I were discharged on the same day and in our own clothes boarded the boat for freedom and East Fifty-third Street. The brown gray walls of the penitentiary receded rapidly.

We were reading the note which I had received from Rhoda through the kindness of Eyes, and Jim said, "Crownin' your dad on the head won't get us nothing. Rich guys don't carry much jack. Might not have a ten-spot in his kick. Get the name of your old man off of the Jane in the Glory Flats and we'll see if he's got a safe."

The boat scraped the edge of the Fifty-third Street pier. My six months was over. I was strong, not afraid and not ashamed, but there was a change. The horror of burglary had given way to charity, or at least a kindly feeling toward some of the burglars, and to some of the highwaymen in life I accorded, if not a worship, at least an admiration which I had given in books to the spirit of Dick Turpin, Robin Hood and Tom Faggus—he who rode the beautiful roan mare in *Lorna Doone.* In a school of crime I had been a regular attendant. I didn't study but I picked up something by merely being present. I had no inclination to steal, but a strong incentive to get a thousand dollars. A thousand? Much more. If a thousand to get my mother out, why not more—say enough to pay the mortgage and save to the hard working Mr. and Mrs. Burrows the acres where they had changed weeds and knotted grass into oats and wheat and corn. Incentive is a good word. It makes an artist paint.

Inducement is fifty dollars a dozen for taking and mounting photographs. I was far above inducement but I was ready to act. I was glad that I knew Donovan, very glad, and it was with pride and affection that I touched his strong right arm as we climbed the hill that led to Second Avenue.

CHAPTER XXXVI

I SEE RHODA AGAIN

ON THE Second Avenue elevated road Jim and I rode down to Chatham Square and slipped through Chinatown into Mott Street, where Jim had a room with two beds. I had less than fifteen dollars, but Jim said that any one could get money if he was willing to pay a little time for it.

I dropped my bag on the floor in the middle of the room. Jim sat on the edge of one bed and I on the other.

"If I want to swap a year of my life for a thousand dollars or for ten cents that's my business," said Jim. "The preachers say 'don't do it.' But the law says if you do do it, so much for this and so much for that. Murder, so much—two degrees of it. Robbery—two degrees of it. Arson; if you burn a house at night with people asleep in it, so much; a barn in the daytime, not so much. Sing Sing for stealing fifty dollars. Grand larceny. The 'pen' for forty-nine dollars. Petit larceny. A nickel out of the pocket costs as much time as fifty dollars out of an open drawer. And that is like it should be. No man's pockets is made for nobody's hands but his own. I'd just as soon to have a snake for a side kick as a dip."

Jim rose to eloquent scorn. "Can't go a dip," he continued. "Let a crowd chase him and I'll run after him

with the crowd. Up to Sing Sing last trip they got up a quartet for Sundays and I liked to sing, but I had to stand next to a tenor dip. I couldn't sing low enough to move and I wasn't low down enough to stand next to the dip. So I quit the choir." Jim, outside of prison, was a voluble talker.

"To chin I got to have a white collar on my neck," he said that night after we had ordered some food in the Port Arthur restaurant, which is the southeast corner of Chinatown.

"I used to be a stick-up man," he rambled, "but I cut it out. People don't insure their pocketbooks and the guy what's stuck up has got to stand it all himself. And how do you know what he was going to do with it? You can't stop to ask. And if you did he'd say he was after chasing up a doctor for a dying baby. And the hell of it is you don't know that he ain't, and you can't go around to see. I went back to things, mostly safes. They're insured. Insurance company is stuck, and God knows if there is a bigger burglar than an insurance company show me where. Besides," he rattled on, "when a fellow gets his safe robbed he robs the insurance company and the company pulls it out of the guys that ain't had their boxes blown. Ain't it *fair?* Or *ain't* it fair?"

The dinner was good and we ate ravenously and briefly.

"The law said first time I was a burglar," Jim continued, as we wound through Doyers Street into Pell, "when I wasn't and lots of times since that juries said I wasn't when I was."

We were in Pell Street. "Here's a key to our room," said Jim. I put the key in my pocket. Jim nodded to a

friend, a woman, and then turning quickly said, "Now you go see Rhoda at the Glory Flats and find out who and where your dad is. See you in the morning."

"What do you think I'd better say to Rhoda?" I asked. There was no answer. Jim had gone.

It was nine o'clock. I walked slowly across Mulberry Park to Worth Street, stopping a moment to view the Tombs, that majestic embalmer of dreams, and then went into the subway to take the train up-town. At Twenty-third Street I left the train and walked east and south to Gramercy Park. The Park was flooded with quiet light from the moon. Some park employees were at work and the north gate was open. I entered and sat on one of the chairs provided for parents watching children at play.

To be there I was glad, and in and out of the shadows danced, leaped and whirled the wraith of a little girl crying, "Sam-ee, Sam-ee." I rose and hurried to the Glory Flats and was soon at the desk. I asked if Miss Rhoda Rhedd was in. "She is," said the clerk, a new one, "and you can go right up." I turned toward the elevator.

"You name Lobo?" the clerk asked sharply. I answered, "Yes."

"Room seventy-one is reserved for you and paid for," the clerk said, dangling a key. "It's right next to sixty-nine."

"No, thanks," I said. "Mistake."

"It's paid for," he repeated.

"Mistake," I said and entered the elevator. "Great mistake," I shouted in a race with the closing elevator door. Self-respect can never be silent. The slightest challenge must be met vociferously. "Sam-ee. Sam-ee."

Slow as the elevator was it moved far too fast. I knocked on the door, and Rhoda opened it. She had been long enough out of prison to recover her natural beauty. The thin rose-colored garment that enveloped her lent a glowing tint to her skin.

Seizing one of my hands in both of hers she welcomed me silently, walking slowly backward. The door left open I heard close behind me. I turned quickly and saw the bolt of a Fox lock shooting deep into its socket. Rhoda laughed.

"I locked that door," she said. If true she must have touched a button or a spring with her foot. I estimated as best I could her position on the floor when I heard the slam of the door.

"Feed you good on the Island, Sammy?" Rhoda asked with mock sincerity. Before I could answer the telephone rang. Rhoda intently held the receiver.

"Oh," she said. "Yes, Mr. Goldfarb, her son is here now. . . . If he is willing, certainly. . . . Within a week I should say. I'll ask him."

Covering the transmitter, Rhoda whispered to me, "The Jew's in a sweat for his money."

"Let me talk," I said and took the transmitter.

"Can you get my mother pardoned for a thousand dollars?"

"I can," came the answer.

"When?" I asked.

"One week after I get the grand," came the answer.

"You'll have your thousand," I answered. "Don't worry—and within a week. Where is your office and what are your hours?" He gave me the information, and the hours were nine fifteen to six twenty-five.

"We can get the money to-morrow night," said Rhoda. "Where is your bag?"

"In my lodgings," I answered, taking from my pocket a scrap of paper and a pencil. "Now tell me the name of my father, where he lives and where is his place of business."

"For why?" said Rhoda, her eyes opening wide in pretended amazement.

"So I can crack him on the head and get the thousand," I answered.

"He doesn't carry a dollar," said Rhoda. "He signs for taxis, and for flowers and for what he eats. No use of trying to learn anything from me, Sammy," she continued. "If you're a nice young lover, and I know that you can be, we'll plant your dad, peel off the kale and spring your mother. If you try to high-hat me—nothing doing and if you're tied in to some Jane in the sticks go ask the Jane if *she* can help to spring your mother. I told you I'm sick of the bozos that call themselves men. I want a real one, Sammy, and you may be a darn fool, but you are a man, every inch of you. Kiss me, will you, Sammy? No peck on the forehead. Let me show you." She rose from the trunk on which she was sitting. I dragged a foot backward and close to the carpet. The door flew open.

"Miss Rhedd," I said, "if you will tell me what I asked you, and I get what I'm after I'll get five hundred dollars for you and you'll get paid before I give a cent to Goldfarb."

"Not a chance," said Rhoda. "To-morrow night I've got on with your dad, but I like you much better. You're a ringer for him in looks. Go ahead, sweetheart. Beat

it. I got things to think about and things to do." For a moment I hesitated, and Rhoda saw her advantage.

"Good God," she said, pushing toward me my phantom mother, "that Auburn is a rotten hole. Kept me there a month longer I'd have died. Not air enough for a rat. Run along. Beat it." Her eyes were blazing. I stepped into the hall.

"Did I have any mail sent to me here in care of you?" I asked.

"Yes," said Rhoda. "A couple signed father, and some signed mother, and a half-dozen signed Suzanne."

"Give them to me," I demanded.

"If I could I would, Sammy," said Rhoda. "But I'm not much on lying so I wrote 'em all that you were doing six for stealing, but I didn't say where, and the letters I burned by mistake with some old ones of my own." She closed the door and soon I heard the Fox bolt shooting deep into its socket.

I crowded myself into the elevator. "Back again?" whispered the elevator boy who had testified against me.

"You see me, don't you?" I answered, well ashamed at the flatness of my answer, but if I should strike the negro I would pay for the privilege with ten or twenty days or perhaps three months.

CHAPTER XXXVII

I GO TO AUBURN

I LIT the gas in Jim's room. With a towel and soap and water running into a sink I scrubbed myself clean. Standing at the window I watched for a moment, through the heavy air, the shuffling Chinamen, shorn of pigtails, a group of up-town slummers, the lobby-gows and the weasels who sold yen-shee by the toy. You learn a lot on Hell-fare Island.

"What'll I do?" I went to bed. It was nearly five o'clock in the morning when Jim came in and dropped a bag of silver things in the middle of the room.

"Stuff I lifted a year ago," Jim said. "The Greek fence gave me a gyp on the price so to-night I jimmied in and copped some of it back. This time I'll sell it to a Jew." He kicked off his shoes and I could soon hear him sleeping.

When I waked again his rumpled bed alone convinced me that I had not been dreaming.

I had decided to eat twice a day with perhaps a banana in between and so I lay in bed thinking. I would write to Suzanne in care of the Episcopal Mission Society and to Mrs. Burrows telling them both where I had been for six months and how I happened to be there. My mother I would have to see at once and learn from her who my father was and where he was.

I dressed and walked up to the Grand Central to find how much it cost to go to Auburn. Up the Bowery and then through Great Jones Street, and I detoured again at Gramercy Park, but for some reason walked rapidly by.

The fare to Auburn and return was two dollars more than my entire capital.

In what is called an automat I ate some food and drank several glasses of water. When I got back to Mott Street Jim was sitting on the edge of his bed and near him on a sandpapery, unbleached sheet was a roll of bills.

"I had to leave you early. I talked the Jew up to a hundred and a half. It looks, Sammy, like we'll keep on eating. What'd you find out?"

"Nothing," I answered. "Rhoda wouldn't tell me. Do you suppose I could get a pass to see my mother?"

"Sure," said Jim. "I'll get one off of Big Tom Grogan. It'll be easy. But I can't get it—yes, I can. I can get it in fifteen minutes or not at all and if I get it it'll be waiting at the door to Auburn Prison before I can get from Tom's back to here."

"Before you go, Jim, I don't think—well, Jim, I haven't got enough for a railroad ticket."

"Count the stuff on the bed, Sam." He pointed to the bills and, drawing his hat close to his ears, he slipped into the hallway whistling, before I could refuse the stolen money.

Jim was gone for some time and by the time he returned my idea of right, which is taught by rule, had given way to real right, which can't be preached or defended. That I had even thought of refusing Jim's offer of money for a railroad ticket made me ashamed, and

when one is ashamed of a thing that thing is wrong. Men have been proud without reason but I doubt if a human being ever felt ashamed without adequate cause.

I had brushed my clothes, cleaned my shoes and packed my bag when Jim came back whistling some mother song to which sailors and others about Chatham Square like to listen. "Tom worked the telephone," he said, "and a pass is waiting for you in the office at Auburn Prison. At ten o'clock to-morrow you can see your mother." I tried to thank him but his large safe-cracking hands covered my mouth.

"You ought to get some clothes with a city shape to 'em," he said. "On the level, kid, those clothes ain't right and you got time to get new ones."

"I think I'll wear these clothes," I said, "but if it's all right with you, Jim, I would like to take her some flowers. Say, a dollar's worth which I'll try to get up there."

"Sure, it's all right with me," said Jim. "All but the dollar's worth. Make it five. I've seen wops what wouldn't buy a dandelion when their mother was alive, slap a whole anchor of lilies on her grave."

"Thank you, Jim, but I think she would like it better if I brought just a little handful and perhaps a little jar of marmalade. She likes that. Orange marmalade."

"Get her a big jar," Jim said, "in New York where them things is good. I'll beat it to Canal Street and look up your train times and get your ticket while you get your hair cut." He took the bills from the bed and stuffed them into his pocket and went out whistling. I walked up the Bowery to the barber shop in the Occidental Hotel.

"Big Tim" was dead but well I remembered him, spick, span and cherubic, when he let my mother have the cab. "Take it, Fingers, you are in more of a hurry than me."

The barber handed me a morning paper. "Signor Giuseppe Torello, having completed his American tour, sailed for Italy and was accompanied to the dock by an Italian Society of which he had been made an honorary life member. He wore a handsome ermine overcoat presented to him by Italian friends and made by George Blackmar out of forty odd skins personally selected by Mr. Blackmar. Mr. Blackmar was present at the dock and presented to Signor Torello a very fine emerald of which Mr. Blackmar is said to have a very rare collection." This item I tore from the paper and put in my pocket to take to my mother.

When I got back to Mott Street Jim was pacing the floor and still whistling. In his hand he held an envelope. "I got a time table over to the Canal Street ticket office," Jim said, thrusting the envelope into my hand. "You got a half-hour if you lam it now. In the envelope is the ticket and the jack. Don't open it now. No time. Snap into it." I strapped and buckled my valise.

"Awful cold up the state. Wear this flogger." He handed me a heavy overcoat. "Like to freeze my feet off up the state one night while I was blowing a safe, and next day I was sweatin' my head off down here." I tried to speak but couldn't. I was thinking of Fingers Leaubeau in her gray clothes.

"Ain't the throat a funny thing?" asked Jim. "If I was a good guy," he continued, "for you to be seen with in the Grand Central I'd go with you, but the station is

full of dicks with a memory for mugs like mine. So beat it——"

In the envelope containing my ticket to Auburn was nearly a hundred dollars and a ticket for a Pullman car.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

A WONDERFUL VISIT

WHEN I reached Auburn the following morning the sun had scarcely risen, but near the station I could see the dim walls and bars of the women's prison, of which I had so often thought and dreamed. At one of the windows, high in the prison, I saw a figure in white and a waving hand. But one could wave her hand as she could. Sobbing, I threw her a kiss.* She disappeared.

On the station platform were several old ladies with bundles and two colored women handcuffed together and cursing a white man who apparently was their guard. For filth and profanity they attained an unapproachable standard. Rhoda had used the same words or most of them, but the blacks were her superior in their order of arrangement.

Nearly two hours to wait. I decided to shave and to bathe and put on a clean shirt and buy a new necktie and have breakfast in the best hotel in Auburn. I got a room in the Osborn House and after shaving and scrubbing I ate an enormous breakfast, and then ordered another one like it, with a jar of marmalade, to be put into a box, hot, at exactly nine forty-five.

At the flower shop I was puzzled. Suzanne used to say that the right thing to do was what right people did.

"But the deuce of it is," she would add, "right people are always changing their minds, because when wrong people get to doing the right thing then it's no longer the right thing to do."

Leisurely I nosed among the ferns and flowers and pots, fragrant and wet with hospitable soil. Suzanne had come into my mind. It was no place for her now and I knew it, but she wouldn't leave. "In this town," she used to say, "little me sets the styles and starts the didos, and I have to be so careful. S'posin' I'd take a notion to eat with my knife—look at the bleeding mouths there'd be."

"Six of these and six of these," I finally said.

"And I'll put in some maidenhair. Make it up nice," said the young woman who had undertaken to advise me.

"For your sweetheart?"

I answered, "Yes, for my sweetheart."

"Then you want ribbon."

The flowers were very pretty and I wanted to bury my nose in them, but I thought another's nose should be the first. I went back to the hotel, and then with the flowers and the box of hot breakfast I went to the prison door, and on the last stroke of a church bell I pressed a button and through the thick door I heard a buzz.

The door was opened by a haggard woman in prison gray. When my feet were clear the door was closed and the woman sat in a chair to wait for other visitors. I wondered what she had done as I marched to a wicket and asked, "Is there a pass here for Samuel Leaubeau to see his mother?"

A rather young woman, not in prison uniform, stared at me for a moment and then turning asked of some

one whom I could not see, "Is there a relative's pass to see Anne Leaubeau?"

A man answered cheerfully, "You bet there is." He soon appeared at the wicket.

"Are you Sam Leaubeau?" he asked.

"I am, yes, sir."

"Then you are the son of an exceptionally fine woman," he said, "and she knows you are coming. I am the warden." My spirits leaped high but my voice stumbled and choked. As Jim Donovan had said, "the throat is a funny thing."

The warden turned to a waiting keeper, a woman, "Bring Mrs. Leaubeau down to the visitor's room."

The woman skurried away.

"Sorry, Sam," said the warden, "but I'll have to take your bundles. Rules."

"The flowers too?" I asked, moving back a step. "And the hot breakfast I brought her from the Osborn House?"

"I'm afraid so," said the warden, reaching for both flowers and breakfast box, both of which I gave him. The flowers he handled gently. The warden too had a funny throat.

"You see," he said, "some of our—our lodgers use drugs and their friends smuggle it in; powder on the petals or liquid in the stems. Rules. I'm sorry."

"My mother doesn't use drugs, does she?" I asked.

"No, no, bless you, no. Sometimes the doctor gives her a little morphine for her heart, but she never asks for it. What's in the box? She will get the flowers all right."

"Breakfast from the Osborn House."

"Your mother couldn't eat breakfast this morning," the keeper said, just behind me. "Poor little thing. Take a seat here. In a moment I'll take you down." Her eyes were kind, and she thumped my shoulders sympathetically with a bunch of heavy keys.

"Your little mama wanted a few seconds to fix her hair," she said.

Frequently the great prison door was opened, and hard working, dish-water hands extended passes and deposited little packages for examination. Most of the visitors were elderly women. I earnestly wished that my pass was for my mother to see me and not for me to see her.

The warden, carrying my box, walked out of the office and down the big stone corridor, a very small part of which I could see, but I could hear his footfalls for a long, long time. The woman keeper took several visitors in one group down the corridor but said nothing to me. And then another group with not a word to me. The typewriter in the back office became silent and there was a great stillness, but far, far down the corridor I heard the light step of a woman bounding like a deer. I heard a door close. Then came echoing from somewhere upstairs an outburst of profanity and filth followed by scuffling and shrieks.

"They are taking some black highway women to the dark room," said the woman at the wicket window.

I saw the woman keeper returning. She saw me too and beckoned me down the corridor with her bunch of keys.

"You will have fifteen minutes," she said, turning and leading the way through another hall running into a wing. She opened a door into a large and dimly lighted

room. To the left was a high brick wall. To the right was a high screen of iron, meshed like a mosquito netting except that the threads were metal and coarser and the opening larger. Close to the screen and on the near side of it were rows of wooden benches, on a few of which visitors were sitting, one to a bench, whispering to women standing on the other side of the iron screen; toiling mothers to daughters who wouldn't toil and couldn't spin.

"Now steady, boy," said the keeper. "I put her far as I could from the others. Down at the end where the screen turns. Do you see her? With her back turned? The little woman. Just moving now? That's your mother. Fifteen minutes. You may begin to use it." I walked toward the moving figure, while the keeper led out visitors whose time was up.

With tears and in whispers my mother greeted me. I told you before, instead of waiting until now, of Anne's flight from Torello, her purpose to see me and her arrest at the ticket window in the Grand Central Station and her return to prison.

Her gray clothes flapped loosely about her neck and shoulders and the heavy flannel folds of her skirt did not quite cover her heavy prison shoes. Not the little mother that I had ever seen. Take the pride out of love and it leaves less love, or a different kind of love. I was embarrassed and ashamed.

"My clothes, these damnable clothes, and I can't kiss you," Anne cried, "and you don't want to kiss your mother, do you, Sammy?"

"But I do want to. You know I do."

"You've got to say that, Sammy. Keep still. Somebody's coming." It was the warden. He opened a door

near me and touched my arm. Behind him was the woman keeper.

"You come with me, back to the office," he said. "I'm going to let you finish your visit in a better place."

"Where I can kiss him, Albert?" my mother asked with her old and lovable radiance. "And he can kiss me?"

"A thousand times," answered the warden, "only my name isn't Albert."

"Oh, Sam-ee," my mother exclaimed. "Oh! Oh! Oh!"

When we got to the office the warden said, "Our rules are hard here. Very. They have to be. But they are not exactly iron, and I am going to let you and your mother use our sitting-room for a while. I'm having the breakfast you brought heated up a little while your mother changes her clothes, and in there you'll find the flowers." I was about to speak.

"One word from you, Sam," he smiled, "and I'll call it off. You rest easy and sit here till you're sent for." Again I started to speak, but the warden walked merrily away, to return at once.

"Sam, my mother is gone, these many years, but you and your mother are both young and before you leave this earth the world will sing to you both a sweet, sweet song. How is that for a warden?" Again he walked merrily away but only to return.

"Your time'll be up at exactly eleven forty-five and exactly at eleven forty-five glue your lamps to the clock." More merrily than ever he left me and I have never seen *that* warden since.

I sat there waiting, watching elderly people hobbling out of the prison and one of two belated ones coming in.

"Your mother will receive you in the warden's sitting-

room. That's the way she told me to tell you. Come with me." I followed the woman keeper. She walked fast and jingled her keys, and dimly through the great thick walls I could hear a sweet, sweet song. We walked fast and the distance was short.

"That's the door," said the keeper, pointing. "Knock." She disappeared around a corner and I knocked upon the door. It was opened as if by a spring, and Anne Leaubeau, never so beautiful, leaped upon me and twined me into a chair where we laughed and cried without a word.

"Before it gets too cold," she finally said out of the suffocation of my embraces, and squirmed away to the coffee pot and breakfast, and the little flowers in the center of the table. The toast was new and hot from the prison kitchen and the other things were heated, and close to the flowers and toast lay the sun-shot marmalade. My mother wore the short girlish gowns that were then so new.

"The dress I was pinched in," she said cheerily. "Got it in Deauville where Signor Torello was singing for a bazaar. He said for nothing. But I know what. I mean who the old bird was squawking for, and if you can get me out of this hole soon enough this dress will be all to the squeejee in New York." She stood for me to see.

"I can get a pardon all right," she said, "if you can get the thousand."

I told her of Donovan and of Rhoda and of Suzanne and my love for her, and about the Burrows and my talk with Mr. Burrows in the cold barn with a warm cow between us.

I showed my mother the newspaper clipping announcing Torello's departure. She read it with open mouth, getting closer and closer to the clipping as she read.

"How remarkable. The worst man in the world to the next worst gives an emerald," she murmured. "Blackmar, Sammy, is your father. He is rich. He must be, but I don't want you to ask him for anything. *I* could have done that. Demand a thousand dollars and if he doesn't—well, Sammy, you are strong. Just take it. He is awfully strong *too,* but take it anyway. Let me feel your arms. See how tight you can hold me. Tighter, Sammy, tighter, tighter, tighter. You are *so* strong." I allowed her to slip away from me, and she bounded to the unbarred window and looked out into the street.

"But you are quite right," she added as I stood near her at the window, my arm about her. "Quite right. Have nothing to do with Rhoda. Your friend Donovan is better. Stealing, of course, is terrible. But you take your father hard by the throat and get what you can. Let's sit down and just visit for we have only to a quarter before twelve and it is now—oh, Sammy, it is only ten minutes more. Let us just visit. Will you sit on the floor, Sammy? No, no, on the arm of this chair. That's better.

"Come, Sammy, from the start, years ago when you left me, tell me about—all about yourself."

"There isn't time to tell that, Mother, not near time,—do you think so?"

"Plenty. Talk, Sammy, talk and tell me, tell me."

"All right," I said, "but I don't know what you want to know. You don't know, mother, where I have been for the last six months," I said.

"But I do," my mother said, her face still toward the window. "Say nothing of it. Please, please, not a word."

"But I didn't do anything——"

"I know, but Rhoda planted you, and where you were born did the rest. It isn't so easy to beat those Jukes, Sammy." She turned and faced me. "You make any real friends on the Island?" I told her of Donovan.

"Stick to Donovan," my mother said again simply. "Not to his business, but—my, how you have grown—but to, let us say, one stroke of his business. Then you and I will go west, and I'll feed the chickens and wash the dishes, and water the flowers on your father's farm." Her hand crawled to her body, one finger furtively digging into her heart. "Let's sit down again," she said, "you on the floor at my feet." She sat in a chair and I placed myself on a little hassock at her feet.

"Tell me more about yourself," she said.

"I don't know what you want to know about," said I.

"I'll ask questions then. Do you like it on a farm?" she asked.

"Pretty well. Yes, I like the farm work about a barn much better than the work in the fields."

"That stuff, Sammy, mother doesn't even understand. I know that bread comes out of wheat and milk comes out of cows and goats and mules and all that, but that lets me out. Oh, Sammy, that Deauville is a wonderful place! And the shopping wonderful!"

The advancing hand of the clock was bringing to us both the near paralysis that comes in the last moments of a rare visit. It people could only say good-by a few minutes before they do, or miss a train and come back. What I thought was, "Why waste time to talk about Deauville?" What I said was, "How do Deauville prices compare with prices in New York?"

"With New York prices I had very little experience,"

my mother replied jauntily and pinched my arm to emphasize her next. "All I had to do with price tags in New York was to tear them off."

Thin ice was forming and, watching the clock, I asked, and I am afraid rather coldly: "Did you ever, mother, in Deauville or other places takes anything without——"

"Without paying for it? Bless you, dear heart, no. Mother got herself fixed up. I wrote you that. My taking nerves are now connected with my conscience."

My answer was a very paralytic, "I am glad."

"Do you love that little Suzanne Stuart girl, Sammy," she hesitated a bit, "very much?"

"Tremendously. Always did, mother. And always shall. The very most wonderful girl! And what ever happens I shall always love Pig-tails."

"I know the feeling, Sammy. I shall always love Torello," my mother asserted, her eyes challenging mine.

"You mean to tell me that you still love Torello? Mother, do you—can you still love Torello?" I asked.

"I think so," she replied. "I know I'd never hurt him. And you mustn't, Sammy. Ever. One can leave when love is over, but we mustn't hate and mustn't destroy."

"I'll be darned," I said, "if I can agree with you."

"I'm older," my mother whispered, "older than you and very much older than I look."

"We have but a minute more," I said, looking at the clock, "and the warden told me to keep a sharp look at the clock."

My mother gave a long sigh. "You are so big and I am so little," she said, rising from her chair, "so little."

"You'll soon be out," I said. "I am going to get you out."

"How I pray for it. Life is so wonderful, but all I can do is read about it."

"You'll soon be out," I repeated. "Goldfarb will do it with Blackmar's money."

"It isn't like asking for a pardon, and then us plotting a crime," she said, looking up. "That would be too terrible. But plotting a—plotting to do something so we can ask for a pardon—that really is very different, isn't it?"

What I thought was not important. I said: "Very different. Not the same thing at all."

"And even if it isn't, Bing Blackmar, that's what he is known as, is such a terrible beast. 'I give you your liberty,' he said to me. How little did he know that he was giving me the finest, sweetest son. Sammy, you look like Blackmar. A great deal like him, or you would if both of you shut your eyes."

The little clock in a niche close to the wall chimed the three-quarter hour. Three little bells masterful and relentless. "Time's up. Time's up. Time's up." And then the miracle. Slowly the long hand of the clock moved back to the half-hour chime. "Take your time. Take your time." And then moved back to the quarter-hour chime. "Take more time. Take more time."

A full half-hour we had of laughter and tears and gossip. A super-visit. My mother soon knew every one in Moorhead and Glyndon and liked them all from Polly Redfern to the Norsky woman, deceased, but mostly the talk was of Mr. and Mrs. Burrows and dear Suzanne.

"Finest hour of my life, Sammy," my mother said as she bade me good-by. "And soon I go to see the Burrows and you and where you live. Write them my love."

Down the corridor I walked. I didn't want to be a criminal and I didn't want to hold up Blackmar. Nor did I want to leave my mother where she was.

In the hall, as I walked, I met a woman. She was carrying back to my mother a gray dress and a pair of prison shoes.

With a slight formality in the prison office the prison door swung open and I was on the street. What could I do? How far should I go? The heavy prison door closed, and as it closed I saw my mother changing her little black satin slippers for wide thick shoes, and handing back to a "trusty" her little silk stockings which could be drawn through the ring that had bound her to Torello.

In the hotel I packed Mr. Burrows' valise and paid for my room and took a train for Syracuse. From the rear platform I scanned the prison windows, and not in vain. Her hand was waving and I waved mine.**

At Syracuse I changed trains to a New York Express and changed again at Albany, the font of pardons. Why didn't I go right then to see the governor or try to see him? He would have been glad to have seen me, but that I didn't know. How could I have known? Perhaps one of you wishes to see the king of England. He has a place and he lives in it and he might find you to be a very agreeable acquaintance and have for your message a very indulgent ear. And again he might not.

CHAPTER XXXIX

BACK IN MOTT STREET

IT WAS after eight o'clock in the morning when I got back to Mott Street and let myself into Jim's room. On my pillow I found a note from Jim:

Friend Sam:

Yesterday the big nigger wench who used to be on the Island was twice to see you. Will come again to-day. She said if she misses you for me to tell you that Rhoda Rhedd has got an unopened letter for you at her place with an Asia post-mark on to it, forwarded from a place in Minnesota. An' you can get it by coming to see her at night and telephoning her before six of the night you plan to come. Them birds learned where you was living I expect by having one of them pimps in the Glory Flats to trail you from the Glory to Mott Street. Soon as I'm back from where I'm going we'll give the deck another cut and lam it to Oliver or Cherry or James Street. Think what you want to do, Sam, so when I sees you we can go and do it.

Jim.

I had bought and read a morning paper and was about to push it into the stove when I saw a head-line. "Mr. Garrison Returns to His Post." And underneath I read: "Mr. and Mrs. George Garrison and their niece, Miss Suzanne Stuart, daughter of the late Reverend George

Stuart, are sailing at ten o'clock this morning on the *Mauretania*. Mr. Garrison is assuming at once the diplomatic post to which he has been assigned at Paris. Since the death of the Reverend George Stuart, Miss Suzanne will make her home with the Garrisons and instead of making her début this season in New York she will be presented to the American colony in a rather small and informal way at the Garrisons' home in Paris."

It was determined that I go to the dock at once. Any telephone book would give the location and if I could see Suzanne, after telling her of my sorrow over her father's death, I decided that I would tell her of my summons to New York, of what I had tried to do and what had befallen me. I would assert my innocence and expect her to believe me. Of my visit to my mother,—I would tell her that too. Of what I intended to do I might tell her, part or all or none. I had made up my mind as to what I would do, but I had not made up my mind as to what I would say. Suppose I said nothing? Or merely that I intended to secure my mother's release?

As I shaved my face smooth I formulated, rejected and rearranged. All the world is not a stage, I think, but every young man is an actor, and at shaving time he is in undress rehearsal.

If Suzanne shrank and moved away I would hope that the pain in my heart would find expression in my face. And if necessary I could add, "Is it a crime to love one's mother?" This I rejected. It seemed premeditated, hollow, priggish, offensive to Suzanne and disloyal to my mother.

I lathered my face again furiously in the hope that I could think of something better to say and at least forget

the words that were so flat and so cheap for one who hoped to be worthy of Suzanne. Perhaps it would be better to say "I wish you a fine voyage, Suzanne," and wait and see what she said.

My trousers were much wrinkled from sleeping on trains. Would I have time to have them pressed? Or in the few moments that I had would pressing cause damp crinkles and make the trousers appear worse than they were now? Wouldn't well-pressed clothes corroborate my claim of innocence? Would crinkles seem to incriminate me?

Over the back of a chair and pulling with an even pressure on waistband and cuffs, I stretched my trousers to the utmost, then carded both legs with the side of a rigid hand. With a piece of loose carpet I rubbed my shoes and composed new remarks.

Perhaps it was best for me to say simply, "Suzanne, believe in me and wait." Then recall myself to Mrs. Garrison and her husband and retire. The main thing was dignity. But *was* it? To let Suzanne know that I loved her, that was the thing. But how could she know that unless I told her? Perhaps I had better say, "Suzanne, if in the space of five years' time you find that you are not married——" No, that would never do. "Suzanne, if in a few years you find that no one whom you have met is worthy of your love I should like to have a long, long talk with you." Insufferable rot. I would just wait and let what words come that would. Jim came in and my thoughts were dispelled by the force of his interruption.

"You get my note," he asked, "about Rhoda wanting to see you?"

"Yes, Jim, I did."

"You call her up?"

"I will but first I am going to a boat to see a friend off. Right now. And I'll come back here right after the boat leaves; about half-past ten. Then I'll give you what I got left."

"Forget it," Jim said, removing his collar and loosening his shirt. "I was to another job last night, but I had to do a lot of roof-hoppin' and I'm all in." He kicked off his shoes.

"Did your mother give up on who your dad is?"

"My father is named Blackmar, and he has a fur store—no, a jewelry store at——"

"I know," Jim interrupted. "Up-town off the Aveney, and you're one of his. I'll be damned!" He stuffed a roll of bills under the mattress. "We'll blow his safe. He's green and yellow with jack."

"Could I get a pass, Jim, to go on the *Mauretania?*"

"Not in a million years you couldn't. They'll stop you on this end of the dock if you ain't stopped afore you get off the farm. The farm is the places in front of the docks and Augie Mayer, and Brown, and Joe O'Brien and a lot of other dicks is there to keep thieves away from the pickings."

"I'm not a thief," I flared.

"I know you ain't, Sammy, but the cops know you are. Them guys study police photographs like I would study a horse race. Ef I was you I wouldn't go."

"I'm going," I said. "That girl out west."

"Ef a fellow want one thing more'n he's afraid of another thing then that's the pony to play; nose, middle and tail. You can't get a pass but you might crash it at

that. See yuh when yuh get back. Good luck. I'm going to do a flop. Don't forget to get your letter off'n that badger girl at the Glory." Jim sprawled upon the bed, lying on his back, with his face turned toward me.

I wet a cloth to clean some spots from the lapels of my coat. It was slow work. "How, Jim, did you happen to know—to know Blackmar?" I asked.

"I don't," Jim said, "but I know about him. When I was last away—Sing Sing—me an' another yegg an' a con man was setting it up to crack Blackmar's store soon as we got out. It was the con man's idea, Hack Slagle. He had tried to hook Blackmar into one of them wire-tap games of his and Blackmar hooks him. The con lets him win a bet of five hundred, you see, on a winning horse so Blackmar'll come along with five thousand on the next. But Blackmar don't come along. He pockets the five hundred and quits and when Mr. Wire-tap tried to get Blackmar to make another bet Blackmar wallops him on the jaw. The con man's head hits the corner of a marble table an' he has to lay up in the garage for a few days to get some stitches in his hood. When the con is out on the streets again his Isabel has got a new fur coat and Blackmar has got the Isabel. This is good. Slagle, that's the con, bumps into the gal at Belmont Park and squawks his head off. 'Who's paying for the fox skin flogger?' he bellyaches. 'Me,' says the wisp, giving the con a knowin' look, 'on installments an' no cash.' The con is groggy but the Isabel ain't pulled the haymaker on him yet. She lets him mush on till jocks and post positions go up for the next race and then she hands it to him right. 'Hack Slagle,' she hands him, 'Bing Blackmar's this kind with me. If he was to come along and rip this coat off my

back an' cut off my allowance and sell my car I'd keep payin' my installments. That's Mr. Blackmar now comin' out of the paddock. Beat it!' Hack beats it, but back in New York he tries to get the girl back, so Blackmar digs up a sucker to prosecute Hack and Hack gets two and six in Sing Sing."

"You said that you and the con man and a yegg were going to crack Blackmar's store. Did you try it?"

"No, we never did. The flu got to going in the prison and the con man was first to whiff, and the yegg soon chases after him. I'm for sleeping." Before I finished cleaning my coat Jim was sound asleep.

Cats and panthers look down on moles and seals. Eagles despise rabbits and robins kill worms. It is easier for men to aspire than to self-degrade. Where one son brings disgrace to his parents a thousand sons bring honor and glory to two thousand parents—also cloaks and radios and vacuum cleaners and automobiles. Few sons are permitted to boast that his father did this or was that. But many fathers can say 'this little chap is going to be this,' and many of the little chaps grow up and send home a telegram, 'I just became what you said I would.'

CHAPTER XL

SUZANNE IN A FOG

MUCH as I wanted to read and keep the letter from Suzanne, which was in Rhoda's possession, I hoped I would have time to ask Suzanne to tell me what she had written, for there were two women in the world whom I hoped never to see again. Eyes was one and Rhoda was the other.

Motors and taxi-cabs, bearing people, fruit and flowers, formed triple lines in front of the gate. I had a feeling that to none but a big Cunard Liner could there be such a rush of people and gifts. Could any of the flowers be for Suzanne?

"Where is your pass?" asked a uniformed official.

"Pass—I have none," I answered.

"Then you can't go farther. Step one side."

"Could you tell me," I then asked, "where I could get a pass?"

"Nowhere," the official replied. "There isn't time. Can't you see you're blocking people with passes? One side." I moved to one side.

I found that the sailing of the boat was delayed one hour and I thought if I remained right where I was I might see the Garrisons and Suzanne on their way to the gang-plank. Messenger boys sidled by the officer on guard

carrying telegrams and more flowers. From bits of conversation which I heard I learned that many of the passengers, if not the most, had gone aboard the night before. I determined to stop a messenger boy and see if I could send in a note to the proper person and find out if the Garrisons were among those who had slept on the *Mauretania*. I touched a messenger on the arm when I was seized by the shoulder from behind.

"What the hell," said a detective showing his shield. "You beat it off this dock or I'll give you a hoofing. Here, Joe, this is young Lobo, hotel thief. Chase him into the street."

"I'm not a thief and I came here to see some one off," I said.

"Got a pass?"

"I didn't know I needed one."

"Cut that," said the man addressed as Joe, "or I'll crack your thieving skull. Beat it!" He seized me by the sleeve. I jerked away, and my sleeve was ripped nearly from my shoulder. Joe lifted high a black leather jack and covering my face with my arms I ran into the street. Perhaps I might see Suzanne out there. I looked at the watch which Mr. Burrows had given me on the day of my departure. Joe, in close pursuit, seized the watch while another detective pinioned my arms.

"That's my watch," I said. "One my father gave me."

"Cut that, Lobo. You ain't got no father," said the detective who had spoken to me first.

"I'll hold him, Joe, while you go inside and ask if any one has missed a watch." Dangling my watch on its chain and holding it high in the air "Joe" hurried back and past the guard and was soon lost to my sight.

"I came down here to see some one," I said to the detective. "I'm not a thief. I came to see some one."

"And without a pass. That's good," was the detective's reply. "Who'd you come to see?"

"Mr. George Garrison," I said. "See?" I fumbled for the news clipping announcing that Mr. Garrison was to sail. "I know him," I continued, "and I want to speak to him if he comes by."

"Kid, you're good," was the detective's retort, "but him and his wife and whole party went aboard last night."

"Are your sure?"

"Kid, you *are* good, but I'll say I'm sure. I was covering here last night."

"Can you go to the boat and on it without a pass?" I asked.

"Sure I can, but my job's out here looking for thieves."

"I'm not a thief."

"No? I was in court the day you was settled. You're that kid of Fingers, ain't you?"

I bit my lip, my head flaming hot.

"Your mother in or out? I ain't rubbing it in, just asking," the detective continued, straining his eyes for a sight of thieves or looking for Joe to return.

"She is in," I replied. "Couldn't your officer go on to the boat and tell Mr. Garrison or the girl with him——"

"Yes, and I could ask the captain to take you over free and introduce you to General Joffre, but what I'm going to do is different. I see Joe coming back with your 'clock.' Might be yours at that." He took the watch from Joe and gave it to me.

"Now you put at least three avenues between you and

this line of docks and keep 'em there. If I ever see you on West Street again you'll be damned well surprised to see what's in your pockets when you get to court. Get me? Beat it."

"I won't do it," I said, "and if you touch me to arrest me I'll call a dozen citizens to search me before you can put anything in my pockets. I'm not such a damned fool."

"You bet you're not. Fingers don't have damned fools."

There was suddenly an outpouring of people into the street.

"She's going now," said the detective, softening as he recognized the genuineness of my suffering.

"If I could only stand somewhere and wave," I said.

"All right," said the detective. "You come with me." I followed him. He took me by the ticket chopper of the New Jersey Central ferry lines.

"Now you get on to that ferry boat," he said, "and stand near the rail. The *Mauretania*'ll be a half-hour getting out an' another half-hour going down the river and you'll get to pass her twice. If it'll do any good to draw attention blow on this whistle." He gave me a whistle. "An' when you get through with it chuck it in the river. I got a better one. Don't thank me, Sam, just run on to that boat."

From the deck of the ferry I could see on the quarter-deck of the slow moving liner a tall little girl dressed in black standing near the captain. In the gray fog it was impossible to see her face, but as she moved slowly from the deck I had no doubt—yes, it was. A gust of wind made a little hole in the fog. I blew my whistle and shouted

"Suzanne," but under the protecting arm of the captain Suzanne had gone below. My boat was in motion but neither on the way down to Jersey City nor on the way back did I see Suzanne or another stirring soul on the decks of the *Mauretania.* Ghost-like she disappeared in the fog.

It was eleven o'clock when I asked at the desk of the Glory Flats if Miss Rhoda Rhedd was in.

"Rhoda in?" the clerk in part repeated.

From behind a partition came an answer, "Yes, she just went up."

"Ask," I said, "if Samuel Lobo can come up." I waited for a moment and was about to repeat my question when from behind the partition I heard the same hard voice: "Send Sam Lobo up. Room sixty-nine." I entered the elevator. It was run by the boy whose testimony had helped to send me to the Island. From lack of memory or from fear (we were alone), he showed no sign of recognition.

The door was opened by Rhoda Rhedd. Rather shyly she took me by the hand and closed the door as I entered.

"A little slow you were in coming around, Sammy," she said, "but I am glad you came for I am going to move. I'll tell you a little later. Your letter is on the mantel. What do you hear from your mother?"

"Nothing," I said, running to the mantelpiece and seizing my letter.

"So?" Rhoda asked, and crossing the room slowly opened a door and closed it behind her. I opened the envelope.

A partly printed and partly written enclosure I looked

at first. "Cunard Line. Please extend every courtesy to Samuel Burrows on this day's sailing of the *S. S. Mauretania.* Request of Suzanne Stuart." Another card I made out to be a properly executed Government pass. I felt weak and dizzy. I opened a window. Far down the river, so it seemed, I could hear the heavy short whistles of the *Mauretania* plowing her way through the fog. I closed the window and sat on the edge of a couch to read Suzanne's letter. No, this wasn't the place to read a letter from Suzanne. I put it in my pocket.

Half thinking to leave, I tried the door which Rhoda had opened to admit me. The door was locked. I returned to the edge of the couch. I took out Suzanne's letter, carefully covering with one hand all of its contents except "Dear Sammy" and "As ever, Suzanne." This was enough and not for the world would I spoil a later reading by so much as a single sentence. I returned the letter to my pocket.

On the edge of a chair and near to a reading light hung a lady's fur coat, and under the collar on a small oblong of black silk I could see in gold letters "Blackmar."

Rhoda returned with a girlish dress of light gray, and with stockings and slippers of the same gray she wore a close fitting black toque. In her hands she carried gloves and a long black cape.

"It's so foggy," she said, placing the cape in my hands. I held it for her. She enveloped herself with a backward settling motion which, were I speaking of any one but myself, I would say was deftly avoided.

"I'm going to my new apartment," she said. "I'll be damned if I'm going to let the decorators do it all. Come ahead, let's be going." I followed her.

"If I'm going to live private," she continued, "I can at least gild my own cage. My decorator and furniture and all that will take most of my money just now, but when you get ready come around and I'll lend you a thousand dollars to hand over to Goldfarb and get your mother out."

"To hell with your thousand," I said.

"All right," she repeated jauntily, "to hell with my thousand. If you want it come and get it; if you don't, don't come."

"Where would I come?" I asked as we left the elevator.

"I'll write it down for you at the desk," she replied, and in a moment had given me the coveted slip of paper.

"Thank you," I said. And then carelessly polite I asked, "Moving about when?"

"I'm moving now," she answered. "Four rooms are already done, but I've been afraid of painter's colic and ain't going to sleep there till to-morrow night. Mr. Blackmar is game and he has been seeing me here."

A car had edged its way to the curb. "Can I drop you anywhere?" Rhoda asked.

"No, thanks," I said. "Do you—are you fond of—of this new friend of yours?"

"You bet I am. Crazy stuck. He looks like you, Sammy, only there is more of him and he knows more." The door of the car was open and Rhoda stood with one foot on the step.

"Good luck to you," she said. Her brow was wrinkled as if she were engaged in a thoughtful campaign of self-protection.

"I've changed my mind. That pretty little mother of yours might cross me. Why be a damn fool? You better

get your own thousand. S'long. You *had* your chance and didn't take it. Good luck to you. That address I gave you was a stall."

In her motor she went north and I walked east in the rain to Fourth Avenue, and in the subway I read the letter from Suzanne:

Dear Sammy:

No one can make me believe that you ever stole anything or ever will.

Whatever we have been to each other we are the same now. All you have to do to be the man I love is to become the man that I want to love. "Become" isn't the word. "Keep being" is what I mean.

How do I know what you will think of me?

Father died fighting for Christ in Saloniki and was buried where he asked—in the Mediterranean Sea. It was storming, as he hoped it would be.

I shall live with the Garrisons mostly but shall do some work in hospitals in France.

If you get my note and come to the boat and you think of me as you used to think, I don't care where we are standing when the man calls "all ashore," kiss me where kisses belong and wait for another "All ashore."

As ever.

Suzanne.

I would write more but I expect to see you. Sure. Sure. Sure.

Suzanne.

As I emerged from the subway at Worth Street, Mulberry Park was bright with sunshine. Late-staying birds were hopping and singing and the gilt dragons on the old joss-house in Mott Street were aflame with golden light.

The *Mauretania* was well on her way to sea, my mother was flitting through corridors again in gray clothes, hoping for a pardon. Goldfarb, in his office, like a spider in his web, was waiting for his thousand dollars. Donovan, doubtless, was asleep and Rhoda was cursing decorators and preparing to live "private." Blackmar was somewhere and Mr. and Mrs. Burrows were digging in for the winter and Polly Redfern Barnard was protected by a system of hot-water heating and a man who could buy and shovel the coal. These things were in my mind as I turned into Mott Street.

I had made a quick review of the current history of my world, of which none was known to happy young Chinamen on the steps of the joss-house or to the bland collar washer who was perhaps that moment planning to drown his rival in a deep tub of his own soap-suds. There are as many worlds as there are people and many, many more.

I was within a block of our house, and in the street on the sidewalk in front of our dingy doorway was a crowd that spelled misfortune, accident or crime.

"Four bullets the cop got," said a passer-by.

"Did the cop get a shot in?" asked his squat companion.

"Only one," was the answer. "It bounced off of Donovan's ribs. Donovan was out of luck. The chair for his."

"What happened down below?" I managed to ask with caution.

"A yegg named Donovan shot O'Reilly," came the answer.

"O'Reilly's a dick from the Oak Street Station," the

squat man added. "A fine nerve O'Reilly had to think he could hoof Jim Donovan around."

"I'll say," said the other.

"Where's Donovan?" I asked.

"He's to headquarters, o' course. What a hoofing he's a-getting right now."

"Jim'll wish he was born without bones," said the squat man.

"Bones is good," said the other. "I'll go it that Jim is cursing the rib that stopped O'Reilly's bullet."

"Thanks," I said, to which neither made sign or acknowledgment. Both of them I saw again in Sing Sing Prison. They were yeggs of a low order of skill. Too proud to beg and ambitious only when hungry or cold.

I was hardly of the kind of which criminals are easily made. To make myself a criminal I had to do it myself, and in this process some few elements were in my favor. Not the least was the sudden realization that my present home, the room in Mott Street, had been lost to me. To be sure it was not I who had killed a policeman but none the less I was now a fugitive even if no one was looking for me.

I walked up the Bowery to Canal Street and taking a wide swing from the place of the murder I went into a basement in Madison Street where a sign announcing meals was circumstantially corroborated by two or three dead fish, a red lobster and some limp lettuce. With the exception of one claw the lobster had succumbed to rigor mortis, which every graduate of the Moorhead High School well knows means stiffness of death. One lobster claw, however, artfully stimulated by a small electric battery, kept beckoning, and after I had bought a news-

paper from a passing woman, I went in and ordered calves' liver and potatoes and turned to my newspaper.

In the heaviest type, Donovan, a desperate convict, had killed Detective O'Reilly. To check the crime wave a round-up of suspicious persons had been ordered. Also a general search for narcotics, revolvers, and burglar's tools. A photograph of our room, of O'Reilly, of O'Reilly's widow, and of Donovan were displayed in circular "inserts," and Donovan's long criminal record was chronologically presented in a "box." Several jimmies were found, a box of cartridges and a bottle of nitroglycerin. A liquid believed to be chloral was found in a receptacle fashioned like a watch. The watch was shown by photograph. A gruesome tale of a gruesome murder, followed by the universal reportorial touch,—"It is believed in police circles that Donovan was responsible for a score of burglaries and hold-ups with which the city has recently been infested."

My French fried potatoes were growing colder, but my curled up piece of liver was uncurling, and so I read along to the finish.

The police, I read further, learned that Donovan, since his recent discharge, had been living with the notorious hotel thief, "young Lobo." "Lobo was born in a workhouse cell and was the son of 'Fingers Anne' Lobo, now in Auburn Prison." A general alarm had been sent out for Lobo as it was generally believed he was implicated in the murder. There followed a brief paragraph containing the record of my adoption as a child and one or two eminent penologists were quoted on the subject of heredity in crime. Telephone-quoted in a hurry-up job of evening paper enterprise.

I couldn't eat. The Spaniard who served me examined both liver and potatoes, piece by piece, for tooth marks. Satisfied, he took back the food and reduced my bill by one-half.

I bought later editions of newspapers. The same story with photographs. One photograph showed the dead policeman as he lay upon the floor of our room, and near his head was my valise, opened and surrounded by my shirts and small belongings.

CHAPTER XLI

ABRAHAM GOLDFARB

TO FIND lodgings for the night without any baggage would be possible, I had no doubt, but my photograph I knew to be in the Rogues' Gallery and I did not want to spend a night or any part of the night in a place where detectives open doors and point electric lights at sleeping peoples' faces, and question some of these before they are fully awake.

I went up to Fourteenth Street and engaged a furnished room for one week. I paid four dollars and received a key. "If a trunk is delivered," I asked, "what is a convenient hour, madam, for you?" She named an hour but there being no trunk to come I scarcely listened to her answer.

I lay on my newly rented bed and thought. Goldfarb could get my mother out. In the morning I would see him. He must have a thousand dollars. I would get it out of Blackmar at the point of a pistol. A thousand and much, much more.

To get the pistol and other things. Donovan was gone. Where I had expected to be a helper, I must be principal. Over on the Island I had heard burglars and stick-ups speak many times of Dan Quilfer, an old man in Madison Street who sold burglars' equipment for cash, or, if he knew his customers, for a percentage of the haul. I

left my bed and hurried to Madison Street to find Quilfer if I could.

That Rhoda had given me the correct address of her new residence I had no doubt, and that Blackmar would visit her more frequently in the early period of this new arrangement than he would later was a conclusion easily reached. The best time was that night. I changed my plans and decided to see Goldfarb first and then Quilfer.

To a girl in the outer room of Abraham Goldfarb's offices I gave my name, Lobo, and in reply to questions said that I did not have an appointment with Mr. Goldfarb and that my business was confidential. The girl disappeared and quickly returning advanced me to a room with a single occupant. The same questions were asked and the same answers given.

Another exit, another entrance and I was advanced another grade into a room which I fancied was not far from Goldfarb himself. Mr. Susskind, the man to whom I was now presented, seemed to be a man of some authority in the Goldfarb organization. He apparently had a double duty; to save Goldfarb from the expenditure of unrewarded time and yet to act in such a way that when the offices closed at six twenty-five at night he could truthfully say to the great pardon-broker: "I have not been over-inquisitive. I have not wasted your time and I have not allowed a man or a woman to leave the office with money of his or of hers that might have been yours."

In this latter office I was asked to be seated, but in such a way that I felt the invitation extended to the merest edge of the chair. As I waited a boy entered and lay upon Mr. Susskind's desk a copy of a late evening paper, the murder head-lines plainly legible even to me.

"Murder. Donovan. O'Reilly." If Mr. Susskind cared to pick up his paper he could read about Samuel Lobo, and see on the front page a reproduction of Samuel Lobo's police photograph. Instead he continued the little business of sorting papers with irritation and haste intended to impress visitors that they were trespassers and in no sense invited guests.

He then rang for an office boy and whispered in his ear. The boy left the room and Susskind placed some papers carefully in a black leather brief-bag.

"Lobo," Mr. Susskind said, as he opened a thin book, "our office register of recent date contains this entry: 'Miss Rhoda Rhedd, a personal client of Mr. Goldfarb's, inquired per telephone if Mr. Goldfarb would accept a retainer from Samuel Lobo to secure a pardon for Samuel Lobo's mother, now in Auburn Prison. A sum of one thousand dollars was mentioned by Miss Rhedd.'" He put down the thin book, maintaining a division of its pages with an inserted thumb.

"Are you that Lobo?"

I answered, "I am that Lobo."

"Have you got a thousand dollars?"

"I think I can get it."

"You think you can?"

"I want to see Mr. Goldfarb himself," I said.

At this moment Mr. Susskind's telephone rang and Susskind answered: "Yes, yes, the governor signed it last night. Mr. Goldfarb was to Albany Monday and appealed for clemency in five different cases. And last night the governor signed five different pardons. That's all right. Don't mention it. That's what we are here for. Worth the thousand, wasn't it? Good-by."

"Good night, Mr. Susskind," came a contralto whisper. I turned quickly.

"Good night, Mr. Goldfarb," Susskind said, standing deferentially.

In the doorway stood Abraham Goldfarb, a diminutive Disraeli; a silk hat, a shawl coat with a velvet collar. In one hand a walking stick and in the other an evening paper, crumpled as if hastily but completely read.

"Mr. Goldfarb?" I asked, rising from my chair.

"This is Mr. Goldfarb, and you?"

"His name is Lobo," said Susskind.

"Not Samuel Lobo?" Goldfarb asked as if no such thing were possible.

"Yes, sir, Samuel Lobo," I said.

"The son of Fingers Lobo?" asked Goldfarb, advancing.

"Sometimes they called her that," I replied, "but her name is Anne. Anne Leaubeau."

"Susskind," said Goldfarb, "according to the evening papers it is quite possible that this young man is wanted by the police. You better give police headquarters a ring." And then to me, "This is a law office, young man, and not an asylum of refuge."

I seized Susskind's arm as he was about to lift the telephone receiver from its hook.

"Do you wish to go into conference?" said Goldfarb imperturbably.

"I do," I answered, not releasing my grip on Susskind.

"How much money have you?"

"Now?"

"Now," said Goldfarb, opening a door disclosing red mahogany and red leather in effulgent contrast to the

shabby streaks of yellow oak with which we were surrounded.

"I have in my pocket about seventy dollars," I answered.

"Want to get your mother out?" Goldfarb asked in slow time with a waterfall in his voice.

I answered, "I do."

"Filial, Susskind, this lad is filial."

He then turned toward me. "We are wasting time, Lobo, both of us. Hand to Mr. Susskind the sum of sixty dollars, then join me for a brief conference. This Donovan case. Very sad." He entered his own office.

I gave Susskind sixty dollars and followed Goldfarb, closing the door behind me.

"Give Susskind the sixty?" Goldfarb asked, turning.

"I did," I answered.

"Not to doubt you, but merely to confirm," said Goldfarb, reopening the door.

"Susskind, you get the sixty?"

Susskind must have nodded or exhibited the bills, for Goldfarb closed the door, and sat in his mighty seat behind a wide surface of polished mahogany wood. I started in the direction of a near-by chair.

"Remain standing, please," said Goldfarb, "while I state the case. If I make error correct me."

I remained standing while Goldfarb stated the case.

"A young man, the illegitimate issue of a shoplifter, himself a hotel thief, convicted of record——"

"I never stole a thing in my life," I interrupted. "Understand *that!*"

"You pleaded guilty in court."

"I did that to protect my mother——"

"Yes, they all plead guilty for some reason consistent with innocence. A self-confessed hotel thief wishes to secure a pardon for his mother. Am I right?"

"I want her pardoned, yes, sir. That far you are right. Can you get it?"

"I can and I can't," said Goldfarb. "There is an election this fall for governor. This governor doesn't like to give many more pardons until after election. They are handing it to him pretty hot for jail deliveries and all that. But you come down here not later than to-morrow,—no, I'll give you until the day after, and hand to Susskind, in currency, the sum of one thousand dollars in new bills and I'll give you my word that if you can keep out of prison yourself you and your mother can eat Thanksgiving dinner together. That's all, Mr. Lobo. No, one thing more. The governor of this state is a very honorable and very emotional man and his office staff is above corruption. All of the thousand dollars is for me. I have a way with me and the price of my way is one thousand dollars. No corruption. Eloquence. Persistence. Some call it hypnotism. Whatever it is it works. Pragmatism. It works."

"Suppose that by the day after to-morrow I am not able to raise——"

"Then your mother stays. Don't take the elevator from this floor. Walk down a couple of flights and take the elevator there. I ought to hand you over but I have sons myself; a sophomore and a junior in a university." He waved attention to two photographs upon his desk.

"That's all, Mr. Lobo."

The photographs of his sons had thrown Mr. Goldfarb into a sweet reverie. "That's all, Mr. Lobo," he repeated.

Two flights down I walked and taking an elevator I was soon in Nassau Street carried north by the bridge-bound legions of clerks, stenographers, office boys and cashiers. I wished that I were of them. They gabbled of the murder, and of crime-waves and "this terrible place to live in," but mostly, Br'er Rabbit-like, their conversation was "says I to him, and her to me."

In a haberdashery shop in Nassau Street I bought a clean collar and a fresh necktie, receiving permission to make a change in front of a small mirror in the rear of the shop. I tossed my soiled collar into a little bucket provided for the purpose and left at once to get a good look at the place in Fifty-fourth Street which Blackmar was fitting up for Rhoda. I felt sure that the address she had given me was correct.

Escaped from the bridge crowd I took the "Elevated" at Park Place. Rhoda had given me the street and number of her gilded cage and later had said that the address was fictitious.

In front of the premises, a little gem of a house, stood a van on the sides of which was painted, "Drappa, Decorator. Bric-à-brac and Tapestries." In smaller letters was proclaimed Drappa's business location.

An idea of great value seized me and during my vigil of waiting I repeated many times, "Drappa—Drappa—Drappa—Madison Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street."

It was near to eight o'clock when a man came out of the house carrying several bundles. He entered the van and drove away.

"Bundles rejected," said I to myself. "Who could reject them? Rhoda, of course." Then she must be in.

Again I reasoned, "If Rhoda were in was she the kind

who would stay in after eight o'clock?" I asked the question and promptly answered, "No."

On the sidewalk opposite I walked up and down. "Drappa, Drappa, Madison Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street." Twice on my short turn-a-rounds I passed a policeman in uniform. The second time he asked: "What are you doing around here?"

"Got a date with a nurse maid," I answered.

"You ain't got nothing on me, kid," said the officer. "Don't treat 'em rough and tell 'em everything." With his eye he swept the street. "That's mine coming out now. Is she or ain't she, kid? So long." He walked slowly in pursuit of a retreating young woman, trying door-knobs as he went. The girl rounded the corner and disappeared. So did the policeman, waving at me a friendly "Wish you luck."

In front of Rhoda's house was a bronze urchin holding in one hand an incandescent bulb and in the other a burnished copper reflector which threw a shaft of light upon the knob of a grilled door. In this shaft of light a six-foot man, fur coated, high hatted and in evening dress, was fumbling for his keys. As he entered the house, the lights were turned off on the second floor and almost immediately the man and Rhoda came out and entered a runabout motor. As the runabout turned the corner under an arc light, I got a good view of Rhoda and a better view of my father. He was a handsome man with a rather longish nose and a closely cut mustache, black with a spot of white in the middle. He turned the corner gracefully but at high speed, one hand upon the steering-wheel, and one hand steadying his chattel. I had wondered if Blackmar could take up with Rhoda Rhedd if

he knew of her prison record. A look at his face removed my doubt. He loved the danger. Some men climb mountains to kill big game, others race automobiles and others experiment with parachutes. Blackmar looked liked one who played a lone hand in life, like one who hated mankind but in womankind found the thrills of mountains, sky and jungle. He struck me as one who hated men, loved women and was afraid of them neither singly nor in pairs.

CHAPTER XLII

QUILFER

I NOW did a thing that I had never done in my life. I hailed a taxi-cab. At the Brooklyn Bridge I paid the driver two dollars and thirty-five cents. I walked through Park Row and around into Madison Street where I soon found Quilfer whose business was screened by a safety bicycle and a sign "Repairs and Parts."

Quilfer was old and bent. Donovan had told me that he was less than fifty years old, but that he had spent half his life in prison before he had found the combination for a life of safety. "A car," said Donovan, "is as old as it's been driven and, taking it that way, Quilfer is a hundred and twenty."

"I don't know you—do I?" Quilfer asked. "You got a reference that you're all right?"

"I have," I said with confidence. I unfolded the sheet of newspaper which I had in my overcoat pocket and smoothing it on a counter under a light showed Quilfer the police picture of Samuel Lobo and invited a comparison with the original.

"Seems to be all right," said Quilfer. "Who tipped me to you?"

"Jim Donovan," I said.

"O'Reilly was a good cop and I'm sorry Jim done

that," said Quilfer. "Come down into the basement." I followed him into a basement.

"First of all," I said, "I have no money."

"That's all right," said Quilfer. "I'll trust you. I get ten per cent. of the takin'. What are you settin' off to do? A street job or store or house?"

"House," I said. "I'll tell you what the job is and you tell me what I need."

"Fair enough," said Quilfer.

"I *may* have to force open a door," I said. "I hope to get in another way, but I'm going to get into a house and take money or what I can find."

"All right," said Quilfer, and opening a drawer he took out a sectional jimmy consisting of four five-inch lengths of chrome steel. Each section was about the size and shape of a carpenter's lead pencil. They fitted into one another to make a crow-bar and one section had one end pointed and bent a trifle, like the nut-picks given to Polly Redfern for a wedding present. Quilfer jointed the pieces and then unjointed them. Twice under his tutelage I did the same thing.

"When you are in," said Quilfer, "do you expect to fill up a sack or hold a guy up?"

"Hold a guy up," I said. "I told you. In a house."

"Then you want a gun, a lamp, a gag, a nose bag, ankle clamps and wristers and a pair of shears." He produced a revolver, flat and short, with five forty-four bullets, a search-light of blinding power, three or four balls of wax, a sponge, and two pairs of metal articles which, except for being much longer, looked like clips with which riders of bicycles used to secure the bottoms of their trousers. The metal, however, was much thicker and the spring of

such power that it was with an effort that I could bend back the tips. Again and again under Quilfer's tutelage to get speed I put the metal clasps upon Quilfer's thin wrists and powerful ankles. They held like vises.

He gave me a pair of heavy shears. "With these," he said, "cut telephone wires soon as you're in the house."

"For this ball of wax," said Quilfer, "make the guy open his mouth. Do that with the gun. Then you clap this wax in. Only one jaw can move. The bottom one. Make him bite into it. The gun will make him bite like he's snappin' off a piece of hot dog. Then jam his lower jaw tight in the wax. He can't open his mouth without pulling out every tooth in his head. Standing wide of him and still pointin' the gun make him put the snaps on to his ankles and then you put 'em on his wrists."

He returned the sponge to the place from which he took it, saying, "This nose bag I don't believe I'll give you. Chloroform is dangerous. The smell gets to traveling. You're good and strong and the ball of wax is enough. Now take them pants off and put on these."

He surveyed me for size and gave me a pair of trousers containing a false seat with loops in which he fitted the articles which I have mentioned, as shaving utensils are fitted into a piece of roll-up leather.

"Now you got enough?"

"No," I answered. "I want another set of springs for the wrist and ankles and I want a ten-dollar bill."

"You got a lot of nerve," said Quilfer.

"All right," I said. "The ten dollars you can forget."

"I didn't mean that," said Quilfer. "Have fifty if you want it. The nerve is asking for two. A double stick-up ain't so easy."

"One of them is a woman," I said disdainfully. Quilfer gave me another gag of wax and another pair of heavy steel clips.

"I'll give you a blackjack," Quilfer volunteered, "if you want it, but if you miss it makes it easy for the other fellow and if you bring it down too hard you kill when it ain't in your mind to. Besides you got a couple of fists. But just remember this, when you slug with your fists come in close and get up under. It's the up in a crack that brings the guy down."

"I guess I know what an upper-cut is," I said.

"When he's rocking back swing right to his jaw and he'll crumple face down to the floor," Quilfer advised, pantomiming the action with bewildering quickness.

"I know what a swing is too," said I, marveling at old Quilfer's speed. I cut the air with a left jab and made an arc-like swing with my right, intentionally missing Quilfer by a small part of an inch.

"You'll do if your nerve's there. It's all nerve. I lost mine. That's why I reformed," said Quilfer.

The old man chuckled pathetically and continued: "On your flash-light you'll find a ring and long string. You may get where you got to drop her down. Like if you make a window get-away, drop your light down to see what's waiting for you. If it's a man, shoot. If it's something else you know what it is and can jump clear of it." I thanked Quilfer for all the things that he had given me.

"None of 'em worth a damn," he said, "less you got nerve to go with 'em. I know guys what just can't pull a trigger. Remember this, kid, with your leadin' witness dead how's he going to take the stand agen you. There's

a hundred yeggs in Sing Sing who wouldn't 'a' gone nowhere if they had popped their man. Follow me?"

"I am not going to kill," I said, "but I want the revolver so that no one will kill me."

Through a rear door and through a dark yard and into a narrow way, between two houses, I followed Quilfer out into Henry Street where he said: "Good night and good luck. I'm always home and always up." Before I could speak he had disappeared.

"Drappa, Drappa, Madison and Fifty-ninth," I kept whispering to myself.

In East Broadway I stopped a taxi-cab and told the driver to go to Fiftieth Street and Sixth Avenue. I sat on the edge of the seat. The jimmy sections rattled a bit but the taxi-cab rattled more and if the driver was suspicious I failed to notice it.

Gramercy Park swirled and whirled with dry brown leaves. It looked cold and gloomy but none the less Suzanne entered my thoughts and took possession and I was in Moorhead or on the farm when the taxi-cab stopped with a jerk near the newsstand at Fiftieth Street and Sixth Avenue.

CHAPTER XLIII

I FIGHT MY FATHER

IN FRONT of Rhoda's house I saw Blackmar's runabout car, and lights burned brightly on the second floor.

In a private place in a near-by subway station I placed in the pockets of my coat and trousers the revolver, clips and balls of wax which I had obtained from Quilfer and went immediately to Rhoda's house and rang the doorbell. After a short wait the door was opened by a colored man.

"Yo' from Drappa?" he asked.

I answered, "I am. Some of the things delivered this afternoon were delivered by mistake. I came to get them."

"Wha-ah is yo' wagon?" the colored man asked.

"Down on the corner," I answered. As he craned forward to look I seized him by the neck and locked his mouth tight shut with a ball of wax. Then with a pointed revolver I ordered him into a washroom and locked the door of the room. I closed the door leading to the street and slowly ascended the stairs.

"Drappa?" It was Rhoda's voice, and I answered, "Yes."

Blackmar, tall, lean and muscular, appeared at the head of the stairs. "This way," he said. He wore a

loose velvet coat and red slippers up-turned at the points. In his dress shirt was a single black jewel and on his fingers were jewels of red and of green. He pointed the way to a bedroom. On a bed were bundles, some of them open. In another room I could hear Rhoda humming a once popular song: "Then he would row, row, row."

For a moment, like one forgetting a "piece" which he has learned to speak, I was in a panic. I know that I stood still, but I seemed to be reeling in widening circles.

"A wonder you bums in the decorating business wouldn't do things right. You're paid enough," said Blackmar. "Go in there and get your stuff."

"Is the lady dressed?" I asked, thinking clearly and rapidly.

"What's that to you?" said Blackmar. "She don't mind ducks like you." He seated himself and lighted a cigar.

Rhoda was bending over a drawer in a dresser. Through the mirror she saw me and was about to scream. With a bound I seized her and clapped into her mouth a ball of wax and raised her lower jaw into the wax. Gripping her nearest wrist with one hand, with the other I took Quilfer's shears and cut the wire which hung in loops from a telephone within easy reach of Rhoda's bed. Then I fastened the heavy metal clips on Rhoda's ankles and another pair on her wrists and tossed her palpitating weight on to her peach-colored counterpane. She harmonized.

Broken rings and twisted wreaths from Blackmar's cigar were wafted through the room and swirled through an open window. I apparently had plenty of time. Donovan had many times told me that a burglar was like a gas engine: "To keep cool you got to move slow."

From a drawer in the telephone table near the bed I transferred to my pocket a beautiful revolver, blue and loaded. I was ready for Blackmar. Gagging and securing Rhoda Rhedd, cutting the telephone wire, and finding the revolver, used in defense of the home, required no thought. This program I had rehearsed many times. The mind of a pianist, if he has rehearsed his piece often enough, is free to wander, unless, of course, he is a real pianist.

What could Quilfer get for Blackmar's black pearl and for the emeralds and rubies in his rings? How long would it take him to make the sale? Would he be fair with me?

Whirling through the door came continuous clouds of smoke from Blackmar's cigar, thinner and thinner, but I didn't notice the thinness at that time. "Slowly," I said to myself. "The policeman is with the nurse maid. No danger. Keep cool."

Thanksgiving with my mother would have to be in a place of our own with a year or two years' rent paid in advance. I would get an honest job at once somewhere outside of New York, but it would take a few months before I could support the little woman in any kind of comfort. And the mortgage pressure on Mr. and Mrs. Burrows must be reduced. Reduced greatly if not removed. These thoughts suggested each other, and all of them, interlocked as they were, took less time than the telling of one of them. I would take from Blackmar all that I could get. I had heard so many times on the Island: "Cheap guys take what they need, but the real ones take what they can get." This philosophy was expedient and I could see Porham, the Moorhead banker, touching a match to the mortgage.

I was ready and with my own revolver clutched in one coat pocket and Blackmar's resting in another, and with a last look at Rhoda who was breathing easily through her nose, I advanced in the direction of the thin wreaths of smoke. Perhaps I would have a little chat with Blackmar before I said anything about my reason for being there.

To my surprise, yes, terror, I found upon entering the room that Blackmar was gone. His cigar, the coal of which was dull with ashes, he had left on a mantelpiece close to the door of Rhoda's bedroom. The door into the hallway was open. With other doorways I was not familiar.

Blackmar had, of course, looked into Rhoda's room and now knew that I had not come from a decorator but had entered by trick with intent to rob. Had he gone into the street to call the police or was he in ambush with intent to kill? I was the hunted and not the hunter.

I stood in a room to which there were three doors besides the one letting into the room where I had left Rhoda pinioned on her bed. From no single place could I command a view of four doors. I retreated slowly, gun in hand, to the rear of the room from which I could see three doors. Perhaps Blackmar had gone into Rhoda's room and would rush upon me from that quarter. Perhaps he was looking for the colored servant, and perhaps he was using a telephone on another floor. I had not heard the street door open and a sudden thought convinced me that Blackmar would prefer to kill me rather than call a policeman to arrest me.

For me to leave by the windows would be easy, but that would be desertion and abandonment of my mother.

Where best to stand? Or would advance be better? The ticking of many little clocks and the rustling of Rhoda on her bed were the only sounds.

Of a sudden there was a click and the entire house was in darkness. I could hear a man crawling on the floor, and I felt certain that it was Blackmar. I had taken a revolver from Rhoda's room, but was it hers or Blackmar's? Did Blackmar have another revolver? Very likely he had a dozen.

No stake could be higher. My mother's freedom if I won. My own imprisonment or death if I lost. By breeding I was fitted for the job. Sired by Blackmar, mother, Fingers.

I could hear the man creeping. One moment I thought he was on one side of the room, but the next moment he seemed to be on the other. Were there two men?

Lying on the floor and stretched to my full length with extended arm I located a chair. On its seat I put my search-light, the light turned away from me. I pressed the spring and in the flood of light I saw Blackmar rising from the floor. Immediate and in quick succession the room rang with four blasting shots of a revolver. I pulled the string to make the flashlight move. A fifth shot was fired.

Through the smoky blackness I charged on the place where the revolver had been flashing and locked my arms into the flash of my search-light. He was a man of tremendous strength. Into my throat he dug his fingers, sinking them deeper and deeper toward the point of a "V" in the angle of which was Samuel's apple.

By reaching into my pocket I could kill Blackmar, but instead I passed my right arm straight and stiff between

his head and mine. Blackmar lowered his chin like a dog to protect his throat, but I inserted the flat of my forearm with the agility which had come from my mother and pressed in and up with the strength inherited from Blackmar himself.

Forget for a moment, which you easily may, that this was a struggle between an illegitimate son knowing himself to be strangled by his father, and a man of great personal bravery defending the home of his mistress from the night attack of a burglar.

With my left arm I embraced Blackmar's body, my hand pulling hard on the small of his back, while I crowded my right forearm under his chin and pushed, my effort reinforced by the muscles of back and legs. Against these heavy muscles Blackmar struggled with only wrists and fingers. If I could keep breathing the burglar must prevail and Blackmar must lose.

Deeper did Blackmar's fingers dig into my throat. If I could tip his chin back he must yield or his neck must break. We continued to struggle. What air I got came in through my nose but it was scarcely enough. I became dizzy and spots of light of varying sizes were dancing in the air.

From my brain went the message to my right hand, "Let go. Take that revolver from your right-hand coat pocket and shoot," but the operator at the backbone switchboard wouldn't send the message. "I" said, "Shoot," but something else said, "What! Shoot your father?" "I'll have to," I said, "or he will shoot me." My hand was moving toward the revolver pocket when Blackmar raised his chin and fell heavily to the floor. As he fell I pivoted from the hips and slugged him with my elbow. When he

regained consciousness his wrists and ankles were snapped securely together and a gag of wax was in his mouth.

With the aid of the search-light I found the plugs and turned on the Edison lights. With the shears which Quilfer had given me for cutting wires I cut the jewelry out of the bosom of Blackmar's shirt, also the links from his sleeves. His rings I worked off with my hands and removed a bill folder from his pocket. Before leaving I took a quick look at Rhoda. Her eyes were open but were dull like those of a dead sunfish.

All of my implements except my revolver I piled in a small heap not far from Blackmar. His eyes burned like coals and black words were struggling behind the wax in his mouth as I left the room and closed the door.

In the street the policeman was saying good night to the nurse maid. He remembered me. "Get her safe home?" he asked.

"Just left her," I replied.

"That's good," he said. "Good night."

CHAPTER XLIV

I RESCUE THE BURROWS

THE chimes in a little mission church were telling sailors that it was midnight when Quilfer opened his door for me. I showed him what I had and he consented to take ten per cent.; me to go with him to the "cash-house."

On Delancy Street, off the Bowery, if you want money for stolen jewelry, you go three flights up and turn to your left and drag your finger-nails across the width of a panel door three times; a long, a short—and another,—longer, as did Quilfer. The door swung open and across a room, otherwise dark, I saw a keyhole. It looked white-hot and flashed a ray of light into which Quilfer dropped and bathed his face for further identification, rolling his head like a small child beneath a water tap.

A door opened and closed upon us mechanically. We passed through a rather short hallway and then down a long flight of stairs, a very long flight of stairs, many more stairs down than we had ever ascended. Of that I was sure. In a darkened room Quilfer left me. Left me alone but still in possession of the jewels which I had taken from my father and the revolver which he had lent me.

Quilfer was gone a long, long time. Had I been

trapped by the crafty Quilfer? I felt that I was. But Donovan had said to me on the Island (the same day upon which Eyes had dropped the note from Rhode Island Red), "Quilf is the only square guy in the business. If a crook can be square or ever was square that guy is Quilf." Comforting, but the proviso was ominous. "Honor is among thieves," said Maline to me in Sing Sing a few days later, "but it never gets into them—often."

My time of waiting seemed interminable. "They are haggling over prices," I thought, but immediately, and hating myself for it, I reflected, "How can one make an offer on a jewel that he can't see?"

A woman apparently ten years older than my mother came in. She was very graceful and very much the dark lady of the cinema. She brightened the room as she entered.

"Let me see what you have," she said. I handed her the pearl, the sleeve-links and the rings.

"Thank you," she said, taking the jewels. "Sit here. You are Fingers Leaubeau's boy. I knew her. Don't be afraid." She left me.

In a moment she returned. "I have taken care of Quilfer," she said, "and you can keep the revolver he gave you. Here are nine thousand dollars in bills. Count them." She handed me a roll of bills. A few hundred in twenties, tens and fives. The rest in bills of five hundred or a thousand. I counted them. Nine thousand dollars.

"Buy drafts on foreign countries. Then sell the drafts. Safe that way. I will let you out." She opened a door. I climbed up a short stone stairway and not far from me I could see the electric fog of Chinatown, under the pale haze of which were a thousand empty bedrooms

and not far away the empty room in Mott Street where Jim Donovan had killed the policeman. I thought of O'Reilly's wife and the awful consequences of murder. "Thou shalt not kill," says the law, "but if you do——"

I was glad to descend the stairs into the Worth Street subway. Emerging in Fourteenth Street I went to my room and at once to bed, and in my dreams I fashioned a wonder-flat for Anne.

Late in the afternoon I was again in the streets, my money secure in an inside coat pocket. The evening papers carried on the front page the robbery of Blackmar and a Rogues' Gallery photograph of Samuel Lobo, wanted for murder. I bought copies of all papers and returned to my room. Rhoda had "squealed."

Looking into a furnished-room mirror well beloved of O. Henry I compared my features with those displayed in the newspapers. Where could I go?

I sat on my bed thinking. Thousands of people looking for me. Looking at the papers and then looking around in the subway or on the street. Then there was my landlady. Landladies take but one paper but they read every word of yesterday's paper with to-day's paper on their laps. Landladies study the faces of their lodgers and more intensively with the progress of the week.

The Police Commission had again "declared for a general round-up of crooks," and had appealed to keepers of furnished rooming houses to keep a careful look-out for any suspicious actions on the part of their lodgers, such as absence from beds at night and "report the same to the nearest policeman."

I must find a new living place, but first I must buy some clothes. Some good clothes. Yes, some very good

clothes. To buy bank drafts with cash is such a well-dressed transaction. With Goldfarb dress was not necessary.

Blackmar would see my picture and the next day would be worse than this. Somebody would—somebody must—but on the other hand the city was large and every night in the moving-picture houses must be many people or some people who are "wanted" and who are not found.

Perhaps after paying Goldfarb I had better go out to Glyndon and stay there until my mother came out of Auburn.

Relieved I picked up another newspaper. Pictures of Anne and of the great Torello. An account of my mother's sentence to the workhouse and her sentence to Auburn, her pardon and her return. The story of my adoption and of my sentence to the penitentiary. Interviews with penologists on the history of the Jukes, Ada or Margaret, the mother of a criminal race. "No, I was not surprised." "Some protoplasms defy environment. It is the seed and not the soil. Weeds kill flowers, but flowers fail to kill weeds." "Yes, Lobo, on leaving the penitentiary, would naturally select Donovan. It was probably the reaction of Lobo upon Donovan that made out of a burglar a murderer." Not in any way surprising. Sympathy too grand an emotion to be wasted.

There was a knock on my door. I started and said, "Come in." It was the landlady with a clean towel. She was breathing hard from the stair climbing, and for a moment sat on the edge of the bed beside me.

She looked at the newspapers on the bed and at the newspapers on the floor. "Terrible city," she said. "Everybody talking about the murder. But me, poor

thing, have broke me glasses and can't read about it." She placed my daily towel, folded thin, upon the top of the radiator.

"Will you leave those papers so I can read them?" she asked. "Whenever I can get the time I'm going around to get my glasses."

"Yes, I will leave them," said I very gladly. "Guess I'll go out now and get the later editions." I put on my hat. My landlady was studying the newspapers far-sightedly as they lay on the floor, and I wriggled into my overcoat on my way down the stairs.

I ran east and walked south, my heart hard beating. I crossed Twenty-eighth Street. On a newsstand I read: "TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD" and saw the words "ARREST" and "BLACKMAR."

West and south I walked down Lexington Avenue to where it is stopped by the gates of Gramercy Park, behind which in the fast coming dusk little girls and little boys were playing at games. Into the park I gazed between the wrought-iron pickets from between which in other days it had been necessary to extricate Curves' head.

Lamenting my lottery, I was intermittently consoled by the thought that if my lot had not been lamentable it would not have been at all. Blues if blue enough are their own cure. They affect a spiritual thermostat which lets in a force-draft of hope.

Through a fabric of fear and shame and regret ran shining threads of Fingers and of Suzanne as if a weaver had spun threads of silver and gold into rough burlap or as if a goldsmith had beaten filaments of gold into the lower side of a rusty iron stove lid.

In this miserable revery I could not remain. I had to

be in Goldfarb's office before twenty-five minutes after six and before that I must buy clean clothes in which I could hide in decent lodgings and conduct my large business transactions without attracting undue suspicion.

The long hand of the clock is a policeman's club, and to its sweep the millions move. As for me I was swept into a booth on the first floor of a men's clothing shop on Union Square and into my hands a salesman thrust a new suit of clothes and underwear and shirts and socks and a box of collars.

Behind the drawn curtain I changed and moved from the pocket of the old coat into the pocket of the new nine thousand dollars and the few hundred which I had found in Blackmar's wallet. I emerged from the booth both for inspection and the advantages of a full-length mirror. A wrinkle in the front of my coat caused the salesman to give a smoothing downward stroke. The new bills crackled on my right side as my heart smote and struggled on my left.

"You might try this," said the salesman holding forth another coat.

"I'll take these," I said very quickly and very firmly. The salesman walked away to compute the bill, and returning into the booth I detached two fifty-dollar bills and frantically tore price tags and size numbers and lot numbers from coat, waistcoat and trousers. To gain more time I drew the curtain to one side and shrieked:

"And I'll have a dozen white handkerchiefs and a couple of ties and some flannel nightshirts." The salesman turned. "You pick 'em," I said, "and an extra suit like this one." Then I searched for more of the miserable cloth tickets, sewed on needlessly tight.

In new clothes of dark blue and wearing a new hat I accepted change for my bills and a bundle.

"Your old things?" asked the clerk inquiringly.

"In the booth," I answered.

"Where will you have them sent?"

"Oh, that," said I. "Yes, of course. Perhaps I'll take them with me if you'll wrap them."

"Certainly," the clerk replied with the modern I-thank-you courtesy. He went to the booth for the jettisoned garments, and I slipped out on to Broadway.

CHAPTER XLV

GOLDFARB RETAINED

IN A near-by shop I bought a large leather bag into the cave of which I dropped my bundle and hurried to Goldfarb's office. I was passed with amazing rapidity into the presence of the thoughtful and immaculate Goldfarb. He held to a strong light the thousand-dollar bill looking for pin holes or other marks with which money is sometimes "identified" in an attempt to trap and convict the unwary. "I show you people's exhibit one for identification. By what marks, Officer—— What leads you to believe, Officer——" "Well, you see, Mr. Prosecutor, it was this way. You want to know——" "Yes, Officer, go right ahead."

"This bill seems to be all right," said Goldfarb. "I don't want any salt on my tail. Too old a bird, you know." He pocketed the bill and continued, "You may look for your mother out, as I said, not later than Thanksgiving. From what I read in the papers you have no permanent address."

"No," I replied, again sick with fear. "Nothing permanent at present."

"Watch yourself," said Goldfarb, "or you'll have something too damnably permanent, and if you want news telephone in here from a booth."

"I will, thank you," I said.

"Don't begin for about a week and when you are on the street act as if you were looking for some one. And then you see, my filial young friend, you won't look or feel as if some one was looking for you. Wear quiet ties and bright yellow shoes. Take a lesson from the girls. If a girl has pretty legs and an ugly face—I guess you get me,—she runs to stockings and not to hats."

"Do you—do you give me any credit for the sixty dollars that I gave you before?" I asked.

"That was for the conference," said Goldfarb. His lips closed tightly like wet sand over a disappearing clam. "Good day, sir, and good luck, sir. Looks like your friend Donovan's got to be electrocuted." He smiled softly as I turned and sped from the outer offices to the elevator.

"Four dollars for a room and bath," said a clerk leaning over a desk of a Brooklyn hotel. He handed me a pen, handle pointed toward me and the pen toward an open register. I wrote upon its page Samuel Burrows. "In advance," I said, as I tossed a twenty-dollar bill in the direction of the clerk and rolled a half of a dollar into the hand of a colored boy standing near.

I was taken to a large room with a red carpet, red plush curtains, moving sidewise, and a red protecting spread upon the bed. Drawing back the curtains I could see the moving boat lights on the East River and a little farther over and to the right of Brooklyn Bridge, I could see the spot of yellow murk that lay like a bed blanket over the roofs of Chinatown.

For a few moments I watched the cars coming and

going on the bridge like elongated potato-bugs with a firefly attachment.

A soapy hot bath is a wonderful thing and more wonderful the soapless soak to follow. Between them I flexed the muscles of arms, legs and back and added a few little tricks that had been taught me in Great Jones Street and in the house near Gramercy Park. When thoughts are unpleasant the energy of blood is better expended in legs and feet. If the mind is in fear and disorder, dispossess the blood.

On the high ladder of danger one looks at the sky and climbs; to look around or down is like pulling the ladder at the base. With my eyes on Suzanne I went to bed, warm, determined and not afraid. Win this girl I would and could, and if I didn't what did other things matter; whether here or there?

In sleep back came the blood heating my head and producing one-act dreams of fear and panic and cowardly disorder. I was glad to see the sun's rays reflected on the gilt leaf top of the Woolworth Building.

In dreams I was in a corner; awake I was in a corner too, but I could plan escape and contemplate the rewards of crime. Awake I had done no wrong. Asleep I had, with Donovan, killed a policeman, the young lover of a younger woman whose children were asking questions that she probably had not yet answered. I had choked my father and robbed him and left him dead. I had seen Rhoda dying, and a colored man dead from lack of air. Eyes, I had killed with a blow. Goldfarb had gone to Europe and Suzanne had married a Hungarian count. What a great escape, the escape from sleep! Sleep is often a sweet refuge, but it may be a chamber of horrors.

Ugly dreams have their entr'actes and fears give way to hopes.

It was more happy to give than to receive. The Apostle Paul had fought wild beasts and lived to write of it, the Norsk woman lashed tired horses through a killing storm and the police were looking for lots of people they would never find.

What breeds faster than an ugly thought? A fine thought. "Beware of the sun's rays," says the mother bacillus to her brood. "They poison, they burn and they kill." "We'll watch out," say the bacilli and in the dark they fall upon and kill one another.

After breakfast, bravely eaten in the dining-room, I entered the Subway at Borough Hall and emerged on the Manhattan side at Borough Hall. Through Park Row, and rounding through Oak, Madison and Pike, swinging clear of Chatham Square, and placing blocks between me and policemen, I came into East Broadway and entered an Italian-American bank.

I bought a draft on Minneapolis for eight thousand dollars and there and then mailed it to Mrs. Joseph Burrows, Glyndon, Minnesota, with a short note in which I told her that I would be home in a few days and explain to her things that could not very well be written. I sent my love to both and requested that the mortgage be paid at once.

I asked the bank official if it would be convenient for me to use this bank as a mailing address and he replied, "Your wishes are but the spoken opportunities for this bank to confer upon itself the honor of making a cordi-al com-pli-ance!" I gave him a fictitious last name and my real first name, following what I later learned to be good

practise among those whose life required the use of written aliases. Deceit adulterated with truth is, I believe, a formula generally used by thieves in dealings with the honest. Among themselves thieves seem to practise deceit most successfully by telling the truth.

In the bank I had for a moment reached that degree of comfort which attends an important financial transaction, but out in East Broadway I was again a fugitive from justice.

On foot I sneaked across the Brooklyn Bridge furtively, passing the blue-coated patrol assigned for the prevention of the suicides who specialize in leaping. Not so much of that nowadays. Sky-scrapers are higher and more convenient than the bridge, and asphalt is harder and cleaner than the surface of the East River. My authority, Jean Maline.

I sneaked furtively, a fugitive from justice. I had no fault to find with justice for in its worship I had been reared and trained. Were Justice a man, if in sculpture, Joseph Burrows; if a painting, Mrs. Joseph Burrows.

I was glad that I had robbed Blackmar. I continued my thoughts behind the thick protecting walls of my room on Columbia Heights. If I was glad I did a thing could the thing be wrong? Of course not. But was being glad a mistake? That depended. The devil around a stump. A puppy chasing his tail. Sammy Leaubeau formerly of Gramercy Park and Glyndon, Blackwell's Island and nowhere vainly fighting to keep his self-respect.

In different moods we crave to see different people. In those moments could I have chosen I should like to have sat with Mrs. George Garrison and watched the lazy cagey trout.

CHAPTER XLVI

ARREST

A FULL week had elapsed since I had paid Goldfarb his fee for securing or trying to secure my mother's pardon. From various public booths I had telephoned to Goldfarb's office and he was invariably out of town. As a public story Fingers and myself, Donovan and Blackmar and Rhoda were giving way to other crimes and other disasters, and rapidly changing conditions in Europe. I was still a fugitive but I glanced over my shoulder less often, and hope for my mother's freedom was a more active emotion than fear of my own arrest.

Calling one day from a booth in a Brooklyn drug store I heard Goldfarb whispering loudly, "I am going to see the governor to-morrow morning in Albany by appointment. Where can I call you between twelve and one?" I gave him the name of my hotel and the number of my room.

"I'll call you from Albany," said Goldfarb, "and give you my telephone number. Then you take down the number. Have pencil and paper by you and near the telephone. Then run to a public booth and call me back. Have in your pocket quarters, dimes and nickels to the amount of four dollars. Get me?"

"I understand, yes, sir."

"Twelve to one."

"Yes, sir. I'll be there. What do you think, Mr. Goldfarb?"

"I'm not paid to think. To-morrow I'll know. Before I go to Albany I got to see the man who prosecuted your mother and the judge who sentenced her. Do the best I can. Call you to-morrow. Good-by, Sam."

I walked slowly back to the hotel. "Not paid to think. To-morrow I'll know." The night passed. Forenoon came and at last departed.

It was twenty minutes after twelve when the telephone bell rang in my room. "Ready, Albany?" "Ready, New York." "This is Goldfarb."

I ran through Montague Street and into Court Street and in a drug-store booth, and after much delay, I again heard the welcome words, "This is Goldfarb. That you, Leaubeau?"

I answered, "Yes."

"Listen," said Goldfarb. "Governor won't act without written recommendations for clemency from judge and prosecutor. Now stiffen up and take what I'm going to say like a man and a loving son. The judge and the prosecutor ain't a going to consent to Mrs. Torello's freedom while her son is a fugitive. Get me?"

"I think so, yes, sir, but——"

"Take it this way then. If you're out, she stays in. Plain?"

"Yes, sir, I understand, but if I do go in does my mother come out?"

"We can't tell that for sure. Probably yes. You'll have to try it. That is if you want to. But one thing is sure. If you stay out your mother stays in."

"I understand."

"Then it's up to you," said Goldfarb. "I'll be in my office in New York all day to-morrow."

"Yes, sir," I said. "Do your best for her. If you want me you'll find me in the City prison."

I hung up the receiver quickly for fear I would change my mind. Then I packed my yellow valise. How long would they lock me up? I mustn't think of that. What to write to the Burrows? I must think of that later. To give myself up instead of being arrested. People would say I did right. Suzanne would say that.

On reflection I decided to write to my foster father at once telling him that following an interview, or a quarrel with my real father, I had violated the law and that in order to get my mother out of prison I would have to be locked up for a time. I sharpened a pencil as I seated myself to write. The words did not come easily. If it was possible I wanted to keep the respect and the affection of these wonderful people. What I had done could not be changed, but in my manner of telling of it I wanted to be truthful and at the same time write appealingly.

I went to the window and watched the parade of cargo boats, low in the water, decks piled high, and still retaining their zebra-like sides which had helped them to escape the Germans and take food to our allies.

Moorhead boys, not much older than I, would be soon returning to mothers and fathers and city hall receptions. I was preparing to go to prison. To go again to prison.

There was a knock on the door and I opened it. In front of me stood a man and Eyes was just behind him. "That him?" the man asked.

"That am the boy," Eyes answered, and sobbing and shrieking she ran down the hall.

"Lobo," said the man. "I want you. Stick your hands out. Close together."

Around my wrists he snapped a pair of handcuffs.

"Just packing to make a get-a-way, eh?"

"I was going to surrender myself."

"They were all just going to surrender, kid. But for what? Killing a cop or sticking up Blackmar?"

"Blackmar."

"For that you have already been indicted, but I ain't going to carry your kick." The detective took off the handcuffs and put them in his pocket.

"Swing on to that bag and if you make a move to run I'll put a hole through your heart." He showed me his revolver with its six, big, greasy gray bullets. I picked up my valise.

I spent the night in police headquarters and in the morning was taken to court where I was required to plead "guilty" or "not guilty."

"You are indicted on three counts," said the clerk. "Robbery, assault and larceny, all in their first degrees. Do you want counsel?"

"I do not."

The judge leaned forward. "Are you sure that you do not want counsel, Leaubeau?"

"Yes, sir. I am sure."

"Then how do you plead to the first count, robbery?" asked the clerk.

I answered, "Guilty."

"To the second count, assault?"

"Guilty."

"And the third, larceny?"

"Guilty."

"Are you ready for sentence?" asked the judge.

"Yes, sir."

"Prisoner remanded for one week. Request of detective bureau. To look up connection with the murder of Patrolman O'Reilly."

"With that I had nothing to do," I said. "Nothing at all."

The courtroom stirred. The word "murder" wakens the sleepy and excites the stolid. A police whispered to the judge.

"Do you know Jim Donovan?" the judge asked.

"I do."

Again the policeman whispered.

"Live with Donovan in Mott Street?" the judge continued.

"Yes, sir, I did. For a few days."

The policeman whispered.

"Know Rhoda Rhedd?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you willing to make restitution in whole or in part of the jewelry you stole? Make a difference in your sentence."

"I haven't got it."

"Have you the money—the proceeds of the sale? Or any of it?"

"Only what the policeman took. A little over six hundred dollars."

"Where is the rest?"

"Gone."

"Where?"

"I won't tell."

"One week for sentence. Oh, one moment. You are the son of Fingers Leaubeau, aren't you?"

"Anne Leaubeau Torello is my mother."

"Torello your father?"

"No, sir. George Blackmar, the man I robbed, is my father."

"Mr. Stenographer, don't take that. It is no part of this record. A vile remark. A dastardly attempt to create sympathy, and, gentlemen of the press, you are advised and warned that the remark is no part of the court proceedings. If you print it then your paper prints at its own risk and peril. Lobo, I shall sentence you a week from to-day."

CHAPTER XLVII

WAITING FOR SENTENCE

MY CELL in the Tombs was on the third tier, on the side facing Lafayette Street, and a narrow window permitted a view of the courtyard in which prisoners were allowed to walk in small squads and at fixed hours.

My hour was eleven o'clock, and Jim Donovan, awaiting trial for murder, was allowed from ten-thirty to eleven. We faced each other daily in the corridor leading from the cells to the courtyard. At our first meeting Jim said, "Sam, the cops ain't going to hook you in on O'Reilly, and they ain't going to try." At subsequent meetings he avoided my gaze. In Sing Sing I saw him the day he entered prison and again the night before his electrocution.

I had the privilege in the Tombs of reading newspapers and I marveled at the speed and the accuracy with which they obtained and printed the facts relating to my mother and me.

The arrest of my mother and the birth of me was accompanied by police photographs of us both. Photographs and sketches appeared of Eyes and of Rhoda Rhedd. Rhoda had informed the police that Mr. Blackmar had been calling on her when I broke in and robbed him. Eyes had visited a colored woman who worked in

the Brooklyn hotel and had seen me there and had notified the police.

A despatch from Moorhead stated that my foster father, Joseph Burrows, had recently paid off a mortgage on his farm although his farm crop that fall was a complete failure. When informed of the Blackmar robbery Mr. Burrows wished to return the money and execute a new mortgage or surrender his farm. The local bank did not want the farm and was advised by its counsel that no recovery could be had against it; that stolen goods could be recovered wherever found and in whosesoever possession, but the proceeds of stolen goods could not be taken from an innocent holder who, without fraud, had given a consideration for the money, and would not give up the money except upon direction of the highest court.

Notwithstanding the warning of the court one of the New York newspapers printed my assertion that Blackmar was my father, and with the published story appeared a cut of a photograph of Blackmar. He was tall and erect and stood gracefully at the wheel of his yacht. In white clothes and with his cap raked a trifle to one side Blackmar appeared to his greatest advantage. When pressed for an interview he said, "I have little to say at present. On the day of Leaubeau's sentence I shall appear and make a statement in open court. I shall make no attempt to recover the proceeds of the robbery. If the contents of my wallet and the sale of a few pieces of my jewelry can lift the mortgage from the farm of hard-working people the money is well spent. I am not a married man and the charge made by a self-confessed burglar, robber and thief that I am his father is so plainly intended to excite public sympathy that I do not consider a denial to be necessary."

Penologists were interviewed on the subject of heredity versus environment as related to criminals, and their observations were printed. My environment they agreed was good. My heredity they agreed was bad, and again the skeletons of the Juke family were rattled. And some of the experts believed that life sentence should be given to criminals of criminal ancestry, while others believed that men and women of criminal taint should be surgically treated in such a way as to render impossible the further procreation of their species.

The police, spurred by their chiefs, had raided Quilfer and Quilfer identified the "tools" found in Blackmar's rooms as burglars' paraphernalia which he had sold to me. As Maline put it later, "Yes, there is honor among thieves, but it never gets into them."

Later there appeared in all of the New York papers a despatch dated "Albany, New York," and reading: "The governor to-day denied without comment an application made by New York City attorneys for executive clemency in behalf of Anne Leaubeau (Fingers) Torello now serving an unexpired term in prison for violation of parole."

On the same day and in the same papers a despatch was published dated "Auburn, New York." And reading: "Anne Leaubeau (Fingers) Torello when notified of her son's arrest developed an illness which this day resulted in her transfer to the prison hospital where she is in a most critical condition."

On the following day I was to be sentenced.

CHAPTER XLVIII

SING SING

THE courtroom was crowded. I stood at the bar flanked by two officers of the court. "He's a ringer for the kid," whispered one officer to the other, as Blackmar, light of step, advanced to the witness stand. He wore a blue suit of clothes, and carried a yellow malacca stick. In his buttonhole he wore a carnation, and he mopped his forehead with a straw-colored handkerchief.

"Some boy," whispered a court officer across the back of my shoulders. "I'll say," said the other officer. He nudged me with his elbow. "If you're good as that when you're fifty——"

"Order in court," shouted a clerk.

"Are you ready for sentence?" asked the judge.

I answered, "I am."

"Now, Mr. Blackmar," the judge said coaxingly, "what have you to say as the complaining witness?"

"I'll read from a paper which I have prepared," said George Blackmar. He took a sheet of paper from his pocket and unfolded it, then rose from his chair and stood erect.

"You may remain seated," said the judge.

"I prefer to stand," said Blackmar. And standing he read: "I am a dealer in fine furs also sell fine jewels and

have been so for twenty-nine years. This boy entered the rooms of—of one of my friends and robbed me. I attempted to defend myself but he was younger and stronger. It has been reported that he has since stated in this court that he was my son. I have been a man who is socially careless but I am not a liar. I knew this boy's mother. She once stole some furs from my shop when it was down in Twenty-third Street. I didn't press the case but allowed her to go. I don't believe I am this boy's father but I might be. No one can prove that I am, but I can't prove that I ain't. If he was I wouldn't be ashamed of him and whether he is or whether he isn't I ask this court to be as easy with him as criminal justice will allow."

"Is that all?" the judge asked sneeringly.

"Ain't that enough?" snapped Blackmar.

"Step down," said the judge.

Blackmar left the witness stand and occupied a seat near to, and outside of, the railing.

"Leaubeau," said the judge, "it has been suggested to me that I sentence you to the reformatory at Elmira. This I shall refuse to do. The reformatory is intended for those capable of absorbing reformatory treatment. Of these you are not one. The sentence of the court is that you be confined in the state's prison for a period of not less than five and not more than ten years."

"Your Honor," I said, "don't you think that that is too much?"

"I don't think it is half enough," was the Court's reply.

I was led back to the Tombs and late that afternoon passed through the portals of the building on Hunter Street, Ossining, known the world over as Sing Sing Prison. I had adventured, and my adventure had failed.

CHAPTER XLIX

JEAN MALINE

A CELL is a cell and bars are bars, and the high prison walls were wide enough on top to permit a patrol of armed sentries to observe and shoot any prisoner whose desire to escape exceeded his willingness to stay. My own cell was well ventilated, my bed was comfortable and the food given to us prisoners was probably better than most of us had eaten at home. Some men in prison, I am sure, have better things to eat than have the women on the outside who are bereft of their services.

As to prison life in general, I have nothing I wish to say. Let Mr. Thomas Mott Osborne attend to that on the lecture platform and let the penologists continue their magazine assignments. Some believe in prisons with eighteen holes of golf and some don't. Radios in cells and screen pictures in the auditoriums have their advocates, likewise their critics. Should a prisoner be permitted to wear tennis clothes on tennis courts? Should a warden be permitted to ring a bell to summon the president of the Mutual Welfare League or should the push button be in the cell of the prisoner? Vital, thrilling, throbbing, but not for me to answer. In cages canaries sing, rabbits eat lettuce and hyenas walk up and down, but during the period of their incarceration insects and gardens are safer,

also some of the lesser carnivora. Likewise some of the prisoners sing, some wait for the next meal and may walk up and down, but while they are locked up safes are safer and life and property are more secure. I shall trespass no more but continue to write of Fingers, myself and our friends.

I was forbidden to write to my mother and she was forbidden to write to me. On the day before Christmas we each could send a letter. Important information, however, is easily transported. Electricians and plumbers have work to do in Sing Sing but some times they work in Auburn. I knew that my mother was very ill and that she couldn't sleep and wouldn't eat.

As Kreisler fought for Austria, Torello fought for Italy and his body had been found wedged by gravity in a crevice in the Apennine Mountains. A machine-gun bullet had penetrated his body but he had died from freezing. Anne Torello was wedged into Auburn. She knew that I was in Sing Sing, but I wasn't wedged and was perhaps lighter of heart than I should have been.

Necessity is undoubtedly the mother of Invention, but does any one think that Invention is an only child? Necessity is the old woman in the shoe, who had so many children she didn't know what to do.

I was assigned to clerical work in the warden's office recording entrance and leaving time of prisoners, checking invoices of groceries and outgo of chairs, desks and other articles of furniture produced by prison labor.

A man worked on ledgers at a high desk next to mine, and rather often moved his lips as if adding aloud, but what he said had nothing to do with figures. He was tall and thin. His eyes were of the palest blue, and brown

freckles lay upon his face like loose bran on a white cloth. His carroty hair was tousled, all except a long lock which hung down the middle of his forehead, parallel to his nose. From time to time he lifted the lock of hair by its tip and placed it carefully on the other side of his nose. He was aggressively clean and instead of a belt secured his trousers with a piece of colored silk which had done duty on "the outside" as a four-in-hand tie. Of these he had a number and wore them rotatingly. He was editor-in-chief of the prison paper, *The Star of Hope,* and his mumblings had more to do with letters than figures.

A new prisoner would be brought in. "A good man gone wrong," Jean Maline would say after a careful study of a new prisoner. "Now why he gone wrong? That is the question for a man like me. When he go wrong and where he gone wrong, to that the police they make ansair, but why gone he wrong? I take a long look and I say, 'He heart and he stomack they ask for what the brain can not get or if he brain can get, the brain do not get the qualitee for the stomack. Good ladees for the heart and food for the stomack of the kind where the stomack can receive it from the mouth without insult. He try to jump where he can not get.' It is sad and it is bad. If they take a smaller jump, eat at the table second both ladees and their food they come not here to be shaved, numbered and make their fathers to drink and their mothers to cry. Never should they come to this place."

"How did you get here?" I asked, but not until several weeks of daily association had made me bold.

"Not for jumping high, my friend. Not that. For the love of the art to fool. I am a forger and for one time I fool them not I fool them one thousand times.

To get me for one little check for hundred the American Bankers' Association spend a million. It is to me very flattery. In two years I go out again and then we see."

"Does the two years seem very long?" I asked, thinking of my own sentence of not less than five.

"Long? No, not long. Short? No, no, no, not short. It so not seem at all. I do not look. If you hold the nose there is no smell. If you shut your eye you see nothing. Time, what is time if you do not look? In prison I do not look until the day before, and then I say, 'To-morrow you go.' Our eyes they have curtains to pull. The eye is tired and we pull the shades. The mind's eye it has a curtain but they do not pull. Most people. Me? I enter prison and I close the mind's eye and I put a timelock on the lid. The day before I go the lid open and the eye looks around and to free mankind it says, 'Helloa, by your leave I present to you Mr. Jean Maline of the University of Paris, a literary prize-winner in the name of another man. Make way for the bashful, modest Breton, Jean St. Augustine Marye Pitou Dumas Maline.' "

Maline passed on all contributions to *The Star of Hope*, and in its columns a number of little sketches appeared that were of my writing, corrected and improved by the criticism and suggestions of Jean Maline. No changes were made by his hand. "Some editors do," he said, "but it is wrong. A crime which no honest man can defend. A drama when it is ready for the public that is most terrible. All of his own that the author can remember is when the audience make hand clap. That line the director he claim too and the actor said it was no good until he himself have made it right. But *The Star of Hope* is on a plane where the editor is an honest man."

"If you listen to me, Sammy, and forget what I say when I am wrong and remember when I am right you make a better living on the outside with a typewriter than do Jean Maline by a pen."

In hours of recreation Maline delivered brief lectures on the art of composition and frequently supplemented them in the prison office. He was a favored character and all of the prison officials, from the warden down, were flattered by his attentions and blandly disregarded Jean's infractions of rules.

The annual elections for officers of the Mutual Welfare League were at hand, and the electorate of robbers, burglars and thieves seemed closely divided between Jean and a wire-tapper with a pleasant address and other attributes which good politicians are likely to have. Jean was not an active candidate. "If they want me I am here," said Jean, "and for the present I do not intend to move away."

To counteract the vote-getting power of this sally, Splitdorf, the "con" man, caused a rumor to be spread that Jean was a count. To this charge Jean made indignant denial and flayed counts, marquises and even chevaliers with such colorful abuse that his election seemed sure. But the resourceful Splitdorf got a pickpocket to make affidavit that Jean himself started the rumor that he was a count so that he could appeal to the voters by calling counts clowns, and marquises mice. Splitdorf made his move on election day and was triumphantly elected president.

Maline accepted his defeat philosophically and sent a message of congratulation to his successful rival. "In congratulating you," he wrote, "I am following the prac-

tise followed in the politics of the outside world and it is with pleasure that I leave to you the leadership of the Mutual Welfare League. Will any of these gentlemen when they are free make effort to restore money that they have stolen, houses that they have burned, or virtue which they have destroyed? Yours with the heart, Jean Maline."

My work in the office was varied, and in the course of time Maline was made prison librarian and for his assistant he selected me.

"I shall teach you to write," said Maline. "From me you will have lectures for near to two years. Then I am gone, and you have three years left for reflection and for writing and for tearing up. You leave and you make a good living by writing the story short enough for the business man who is not too tired.

"The first idea I teach you now. Do not too much describe your character. Leave that to the man who buys your story. Do not say 'This man he climbed the stair slowly. He was very fat and very poor.' Say like this, 'He climb the stair. He was puffing but he liked to eat. Perhaps some day if he have luck he have a room on the ground floor.' You see. The reader he see somebody. He not just hear about him. You see?"

"I think I do," I answered.

"I make it how you *know* you do," said Maline. "Listen. You do not say 'Madame stood before the glass combing her long and beautiful brown hair. Madame was near to forty years old and found herself more and more noticing those advertisements which have to do with the hair.' You say, 'Madame was satisfied as she looked into her mirror, but a look at her comb made her stop.

Her brown hair was beautiful—but not on the comb.' The reader he know all he want about her and some the author does not know."

Every day Maline had a "don't do this" but "do do this." I wrote, and Maline, crumpling in his hand what I had written, tugged at his lock of carroty hair and told me not to be discouraged.

In what Maline said I had great faith. Was it justified? These pages—are they promising, or if Maline were out of prison would he crumple them in his hand? When this book shall be placed on a shelf in the library of the prison where Jean is now confined will Maline read it through or tug at his carroty lock and say, "Too soon"?

CHAPTER L

I VISIT MY MOTHER

AT CHRISTMAS time my mother and I wrote to each other. She thought that she would be stronger in the spring when the snows were gone and a bird which she knew had returned from the worms and bugs of Florida to eat breadcrumbs from her window-sill. There was but little life in her letter and in my own there was none at all. One poor relative to another and both in prison. The weeks passed slowly. Days were successively subtracted from the total, but the total seemed not to diminish. My mind's eye was wide open at Sing Sing and so was my mother's at Auburn.

Acquaintance with prisoners was of slow but certain growth, and as I came to know criminals better the crimes of which they had been convicted horrified and revolted me less and less. If in a given community it can be said "They all do it," how quickly it will be said, "What if they do?" As a class the prisoners were far from intelligent and they developed a not uncheerful martyrdom in the belief that mankind was divided into two classes, those who were caught and those who were not caught, with a few virtuous onlookers known as suckers.

To this prevailing doctrine I did not subscribe, nor did Jean Maline. Lanny, the Reverend George Stuart,

Suzanne, Mr. and Mrs. Burrows and the whole Moorhead commonalty were my sentinels; also the memory of my mother as she was in my earlier days, by precept if not by example. Beyond these watchful sentinels the vicious ideas of thieves and burglars could not pass, for one or all of my spiritual guard would awaken me and arm me. Most often of all I think it was Suzanne, but Joseph Burrows and his wife were never far away. They streamed rays of sunlight into my cell and strewed the floor with the corpses of sun-hating germs.

Maline required no guard. "The catchers are always stronger than the caught. The workers can beat the idle. A live engine can push a dead engine up the track or off the track. Our friends here are no good. I am ashamed not of what I do, but of the society which I here find. The criminal he is small in number but he is also himself not large. Monsieur Volstead they say he have organized a big army of criminals and perhaps he have, but I say you can not write in a book and put a book on a shelf and make of the honest man a criminal."

These things Maline said not with the taint of monologue but in fragments as the weeks and months passed from "time to do" into "sentence served."

The greatest teacher I ever had, Maline. I hear from him occasionally. For a time he was a net-mender on the coast of Brittany but at present he is a member of a penal colony on an island that flies the tri-color flag of France. If I am in any way whimsical give credit or debit to Jean St. A. B. P. D. Maline.

From a sound sleep in a pitch dark cell I was awakened by the grating of a key in the door. "Put these on," said the warden, "and I'll come back and get you."

He put on my bunk the clothes which I had worn when I came to prison. "Your mother is dying in Auburn Prison and I am going to take you to see her in my automobile." I started to stammer something.

"We are going, law or no law," said the warden. "If the governor wants my job for this he can have it."

It was reddening into dawn when we crossed the Poughkeepsie bridge, and the warden turned the car north with the arrow trembling around fifty miles.

"Leave the Catskills to the south of us," said the warden, lip-rolling his cigar, "and then shoot her across to Auburn. Good roads and make better time. Fewer people. And better people. Always better when they're few."

The arrow was nearer to sixty than to fifty as we swerved to the left and slowed down to descend a hill. At the bottom was a beautiful lake. From there on to Auburn a hill to climb, a hill to descend and at the bottom a beautiful silvery lake.

"You don't have many prisoners from this part of the state, do you, Warden?" I asked, coming for a moment out of the numbness that had seized me in body and in soul.

"Mighty few," said the warden, "but those we get are extra brutal. Takes an awful bad man not to be a good man up around these blue lakes. I was born over to near Delhi. Even the Indians was good Indians here. Delawares and Mohawks. What's done here is mostly with axes or corn knives." He stopped the car, pulling to one side of a road close edging a frozen lake, and handed me some fried egg sandwiches and a bottle of coffee kept hot.

"Knew one fellow," the warden continued between bites and swallows, "who tied his wife, still kicking, into a sack. Then he digs a hole in the ice of a frozen river and drops in the sack. The river had a fast current." He gazed steadily at me to see if my mind was flowing with the current and the sack. Satisfied he resumed.

"The nails in the husband's shoes fits the tracks on the ice and he's got her insured for three hundred thousand dollars and he's stuck on a hop-picker out of Syracuse and he admitted he done it so we bumped him off." He produced more sandwiches and, again starting the car, he drove as he ate.

"I see by yesterday's paper that I got another man to bump off. Fellow named Donovan convicted down to the city of killing a cop."

"Was the policeman's name O'Reilly?" I asked.

"Well, now you know that's a funny thing," the warden said, "I never can remember the name of any one who gets killed. He's out of the picture with me. Where, how, when, I always remember. Donovan killed this 'cop' in a room in Mott Street which they tell me is the Broadway and the Fifth Avenue of Chinatown, also the kitchen and sink. Looks like we had ought to make Auburn by eleven o'clock. That's Auburn now where you see the chimney smoke from the harvester works."

We pulled into the curb in front of the prison. The warden asked me to remain in the car while he went into the prison office. He pulled out a pair of handcuffs, hesitated and then entered the prison, replacing the handcuffs as he went. I was tied to Auburn Prison, and he knew it, by cables that would never snap.

I could see the window of my mother's cell, but I knew

that she was not behind that window. Curled up in a hospital bed she was fighting, friendless and alone, fighting to live where living wasn't worth a fight.

The warden came to get me. "When we get into the prison," he said, "a head nurse near the door will say to you, 'This way, Doctor,' and you go right along behind her. She is all right and I am all right, but the less there is in this thing——" He nodded knowingly as the great prison door opened before us.

"This way, Doctor," said a rangy, fast-walking nurse, and I followed her to the entrance door of the hospital ward. Rows of white beds and white pillows I saw, and on them some faces were white and some were black.

"Take the middle aisle," the nurse whispered. "We don't keep it very light in here, but you'll find your mother on the next bed but the last. On the right. On the other side of the bed you'll find a chair." I took a step in the direction of the bed, but the nurse plucked my sleeve.

"Not more than five minutes. Her eyes are closed but she is awake. She won't eat and can't sleep. We keep her going with hypodermics. Just sit on the chair and let her look."

Quietly I sat on the chair. Partly covered with her arm was the thin, thin face of Anne Torello. A widow, but of that, strange to think, I had never thought before. She opened her eyes.

"Pull the curtain up, Sammy. Mother wants a long, long look." I raised the curtain, and my mother stared at me and then at my clothes; a blue suit that fitted, a clean white collar and a bow tie with polka dots.

"For God's sake pull down that curtain. Yuh want

to burn my eyes out?" A heavy mass of black flesh rolled seismically from one of its sides to the other. My mother nodded, and I pulled down the curtain and returned to my chair. She let her hand fall on to my arm and feel its way down to my hand and she hooked her little finger into mine, then pulled herself clear of the bed and on to my knees. A patrolling nurse threw a blanket over her and tucked in the edges.

"I am so glad that you are out," my mother whispered. "They just couldn't keep you, and now you'll try again for me—won't you?"

"I will," I said, "my very best."

"With you in I didn't care. Just couldn't eat."

"And now——"

"Bless your heart, Sammy, when you came and before you raised the curtain I thought you were in prison clothes. Some of the wards in Auburn are for men——"

A nurse disengaged one of my mother's hands from my neck and felt her pulse. "Just fine, Fingers. Won't you eat a cup of broth and a little toast?"

My mother laughed a little. "Not a cup—a bowl. And a whole loaf of toast. Sammy, was there ever a whole loaf of toast? Golly, how burned it would have to be on the outside to be toast on the inside. Give me just four winks of sleep will you, Sammy, before the toast comes—a whole loaf and an orange grove of marmalade." She was soon asleep and obeying the returning nurse I put her back into bed and tucked the bedclothes close around her.

"First natural sleep in weeks," the nurse said. "This girl is going to get well. You'll have to leave now." I kissed my mother on the forehead.

"When she wakes," I said to the nurse, "tell her I'll write her from New York."

The nurse who had guided me to the hospital ward was at the door to lead me back to my warden. In the half-lighted corridor we encountered a small squad of women marching with pails and mops.

"He has done a wonderful thing," the nurse said as we joined the warden of Sing Sing.

"Why, what did I do?" I asked.

"Well, Doctor," she smiled, "I have never known another doctor who put together a broken heart, and I think you have."

The nurse followed us out of the prison and on to the walk. She told the warden that if Anne Torello found I was still in prison the news would kill her. It was arranged that for a time at least I should write a short letter once a week at Sing Sing and the warden would have it posted in New York in a larger envelope addressed to the nurse at Auburn. As the warden started the engine I threw my arms around the nurse and kissed her. Then I jumped into the car.

"I think we can cover this up," the warden of Sing Sing said. "We'll make it so we get back late to-night and for to-day I'll get you entered 'sick and confined to his cell.' If there is a leak, I'm healthy and I wasn't always warden."

CHAPTER LI

THE WHITEST LIE

IN THE prison library the morning after my return from Auburn, Maline, tugging at his forelock as if undecided on which side of his nose the lock belonged, looked at me narrowly and asked:

"On the lev-el, kid, how did you find her?"

"Maline, I found her very ill."

"And perhaps you leave her well?"

"Better, I think."

"The sons they kill more than disease. The sons they save more than doctors." With his forelock he flicked away a viscous tear and made of it a dike against some more.

"I am not," he said, "a pig. I do not grunt and I do not squeal."

Maline busied himself with cataloguing some new books which had come in from Mrs. Tams, and kept busy until he was sure of his dike.

"My own mother," he said, "she is a catcher of fish with nets, but what she wants to catch is a blue-eyed baby she used to know, Jean. How careful she pick the names, Jean St. Augustine Barye Pitou Dumas Maline. Old ladies, Monsieur Leaubeau, they do always throw they nets into the sea of memory and in the nets they try

to catch a blue-eyed baby—but how they going to catch if the blue-eyed baby he be locked up in the public prison?"

To my mother I wrote:

My dearest:

I am going to try to be a writer as you wanted me to be when I was little. I have been fortunate in securing the interest and guidance of a man extremely clever with his pen. He is a Frenchman who attended the University of Paris. He is most kind and teaches me with no thought of compensation.

You will get well and then we will get you out. We started, you and I, in a race in which it seemed that we couldn't win. But we will win, and the prize is happiness.

I shall write you short letters but often. I shall give you no address because until you are quite well you should not make the effort to write. I am comfortable and I am well fed and am doing nothing that is not honest and honorable. What grand times we will have when you come home.

My love to you, dearest, and best,

Sammy.

This letter I handed to the warden, and he dropped it in a mail box in New York City. Every week I wrote my mother and every week the letter was mailed in New York City.

I worked in the prison office in the forenoon and around the prison library in the afternoon. More stories of mine appeared in *The Star of Hope,* and I had definitely, if rather bumptiously, decided to support myself and my mother by selling stories if I could find publishers who would accept my work. Of Suzanne I thought often, but for that matter so did I think often of the

moon and the stars in the handle of the dipper that could be seen through my narrow window.

Jim Donovan, manacled to a deputy sheriff, was halted for a moment in front of the office desk on his way to the death-house reflection and execution. Passing close to him I squeezed his hand. "Forget it," said Donovan. "I always knew that some day O'Reilly would find out and come to kill me. But what I didn't know was that I'd kill O'Reilly. I'm going to try to see you once before I go. The night before. I'll be glad to see you but awfully sorry you are here. On the level, kid, I'm sore to see you in this place."

He was hustled away before I could answer but he turned as he marched and said, "The Court of Appeals gets a crack at my case and that keeps me around for a couple of months—or maybe four. If you are still here I'd like to see you the night before. Good luck, kid."

"A couple of months or maybe four." How short they seemed when they had seemed so long.

Put a million people in front of a public clock. The time is the same to all. But the passage of time? A little girl is waiting for Christmas. An older girl waits for the incoming of one steamer and a mother waits against the sailing of another.

Not long after my return from Auburn I received a letter:

Our dear son:

We must be honest to you. We were terribly shocked when we learned that the money you sent to us was stolen. We have finally arranged a new mortgage with the bank, and all of the money you sent to us has been returned to Blackmar. We love you and we always shall.

We pray for your health and yearn for the day of your freedom. This is your home. You made it so and whatever you have done wrong we know that it was not for any gain to yourself. You came to us a sympathetic and bravely cheerful little boy. You were a good boy when you left and you will be very welcome when you come back to us. We want you, and when your mother is allowed her freedom we want her too.

Prices are getting better and with fair fortune for the next year's crops we can pay off quite a large fraction on the farm and in five or six years we hope to own it clear. Your mother may not like it at first, but with chickens to feed and one or two other little chores we hope that she will not be unhappy.

We love you dearly, Sammy, and if you are permitted to write just say, if it is true, that you love us. We are waiting and we love you.

Your affectionate foster parents,
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Burrows.

At the warden's suggestion I answered by telegram which he insisted should be prepaid by him. I got my message into ten words:

"My love and my gratitude to you very noble people."

To Blackmar I immediately sent a letter:

Sir:

I am informed that there has been returned to you eight thousand dollars. When I get out of this place I shall ask you for a statement of balance due you. I shall earn wages on the farm to which I shall return and I am very hopeful that I shall be able to earn a little money by my pen. In any event I shall send you every week a sum of money until the value of what I took

has been returned to you. As evidence of the real value of the jewelry which I took I shall expect you to produce bills from the jeweler. The money I took amounted to a few hundred dollars. You are entitled to nothing but I shall pay you just the same—every cent with interest.

Yours,
Samuel Burrows.

I made a copy of this letter and sent it to Mr. and Mrs. Burrows, and they responded in their fine and simple language. I did not keep their letter and not by one syllable would I permit it to be garbled by my faulty recollection. It was a letter of distilled sincerity and it strengthened my spirit.

In the prison Maline marked pages or chapters in books, and gave them to me to read. "Say to me after you read," said Jean, "what is good and what is bad and then tell me why, and after that I tell you why you are wrong and perhaps sometimes I will say you are right." I did as I was told and Jean told me why I was wrong.

One Sunday afternoon a keeper led me to the death-house. In the morning Jim Donovan was to be electrocuted and when given permission to see a relative or a friend he had said, "Get Sammy Leaubeau."

The keeper stood by as I entered Jim's cell to see that I furnished him no powder, liquid or other instruments of destruction for Law says, "We'll kill you my way with witnesses, and you'll never kill yourself your way and alone."

Jim was sitting on his cot and near him lay some photographs. "It's only to say good-by, kid," he said, rising, "and hand you a tip. When you get out of here

blow the country in a new place, get a job and marry the best girl that'll take you. If the best girl you find is another guy's wife move to another town. The Bible says you shan't kill, but it's for another commandment that they're goin' to bump me, and O'Reilly's widow put it in writing to the governor and asked him to commute me to life."

"What did the governor say, Jim?" I asked.

"He refused to do it. That's all I know, but I got a pretty straight tip that the guv' said right to her face that if he had the power he'd send her where she could explain to O'Reilly but, as it was, Donovan could go ahead and see the lay of the land in the next world. And so in the morning Donovan goes." He laughed a little laugh. "To see the lay of the land," he repeated.

He seized my elbows in an iron grip. "Kid, beat it," he muttered fiercely, "and go straight and do all them things that a kid dreams he's goin' to do. Beat it. Don't say good-by. Put your arms around my neck." I did.

Early the next morning Jim Donovan went out into the next world to see the lay of the land.

CHAPTER LII

THE LAY OF THE LAND

TIME marched slowly and with a slothful foot.

Early in November the warden sent for me and I went into his private office.

"Sam," he said, "George Blackmar has gone to Albany and petitioned the governor for a pardon. I have been asked to make a report on your conduct here. Don't get excited, for these things move slowly if they move at all. You have got some awful good people pulling for you and I want you to know it." I mumbled my thanks.

"The governor is going on a tour of prison inspection week after next. First to Dannemora, then Elmira and then Auburn, getting here the day before Thanksgiving, and I'll do my best to get an interview for you."

"If I can talk with him," I said, "I'll do what I always should have done. Ask him direct to pardon my mother."

"Yes," said the warden, smiling. "You can do that, of course but——" He continued to smile.

"But what, Mr. Warden," I asked, by no means liking the smile of amusement that played around his lips.

"I'm afraid I'll talk too much, Sam. You had better go back to work."

"But, Mr. Warden, could it do any harm if I said, 'Mr. Governor, in all ways but one my mother is the finest——'?"

"Go back to your work."

I went.

On the Wednesday afternoon before Thanksgiving the governor arrived at the prison, but shortly before his arrival I was ordered to my cell. No reason was given and all the cells on my tier were vacant. Would the governor see me in my cell or had he refused an interview. I knew that some prisoners would be allowed to see him, but, too, I knew that they were grouped in a room adjacent to the warden's office.

The door of my cell was not locked and Maline slipped in quietly and gave me my outside clothes. "Put these on," he said, "and go quietly to the office. You are pardoned." There was a gurgle in his voice. "Dress fast," he gasped. "There is a woman waiting for you and a beautiful, beautiful girl and some other people—very swell, and over them all the governor he laugh and blow over them big clouds of his cigar." Jean ran furiously down the corridor leaving me to dress.

The warden came. I was unable to speak but tugged furiously at my shoes.

"The governor," the warden said, "has gone down to New York."

"Don't I get a chance to ask the governor about—to tell him about——"

"Easy now," said the warden. "The governor himself handed a pardon to your mother at Auburn and

your mother got him to—I'm getting mixed up. Your mother and Mrs. Garrison and her husband and a girl they call Suzanne got the governor.—Come, come, Sammy, what do you care how your tie looks? Your mother is waiting in my office. Your mother and some friends." He slipped his arm into mine and we went down iron steps and over well worn paths in stone that I would never tread again.

In the small room back of his office the warden left me alone. Through the ground-floor window I gazed into the cordial outdoors. It was dusk but the glow was soft and entrancing. On the high road up the hill I could see two long shadows with sidelights; big powerful cars. I wondered whose they were. I had ridden in a big car once with Lanny Garrison. As I looked a group of people climbed the hill. At the top of the hill a tall man in a fur coat detached himself from the group. As he went he lifted his hat and got into the lower and longer of the two cars. The car jumped forward and as it shot past the street light on the corner I thought I recognized a runabout that I had seen before. The car moved furiously, but in the space between a pulled-down hat and a high fur collar there protruded a long cigar and the prominent nose and chin of Blackmar. I passed my hand thinkingly over my own face. Both nose and chin were prominent. I am told that sometimes in court proceedings a child goes on the witness stand and swears, "I hate my father."

Into the limousine climbed the group so quickly abandoned by Blackmar, and almost immediately the interior of the car was brilliantly lighted. Sitting in front and next to the chauffeur was George Garrison. He was

lighting a cigarette and had the appearance of a shy but contented guest. In the tonneau on the side toward me, tight-hatted and sitting erect, was the wonder girl of the world. On the farther side was Lanny Garrison and between them a little woman whom I couldn't see but knew to be Anne Leaubeau Fingers Torello.

The door of the warden's office opened. "Sam," said the warden. "Your mother suddenly decided that she couldn't and wouldn't see you in this building."

"And the little girl was crying, she say 'Me too,' and she golly good right," said Maline.

"We'll take you to the car," said the warden.

Again I seemed to be speechless.

"To near the car we take him. For those things, Mr. Warden, I have a nicer feel than you," said Maline.

They left me and we said "good-by" half-way up the hill. I pulled in my chin and finished the little journey and entered the car on Suzanne's side, for that side was nearer and Suzanne had opened the door.

"You've got to hold your mother," said Suzanne as she took my hand in both of hers, gloveless.

"If you weren't so big I'd be holding you," said Lanny Garrison, flattening her big wide mouth on my cheek.

Mr. Garrison, turning in his seat for a moment, rapped on the glass partition and then clasped his hands to indicate his approval.

For somewhere we were off. In leaving prison your destination is not important.

My mother's speech had its old vivacity and most of her words were crisply turned up at the ends, but sometimes her sentences were stopped abruptly with a little gasp after which she snuggled close to my shoulder.

I had known nothing of illness. In my mind was the presumption of youth that one living at night would be alive in the morning, alive this week, alive next week, and so through the months and years.

Experience may be a wonderful teacher, but she is dressed in gray, wears glasses on the end of her nose and the children never bring her crocuses or apples. If we attend her classes we like the back seats where we can play behind geographies and where open windows allow the singing of birds to vary the wise dronings of that honest well-meaning old lady, Miss Minerva Experience.

I did remember, and remember uncomfortably, that on my first visit to Auburn the warden had said the doctor sometimes gave my mother morphine but that she never asked for it.

We had detoured into Sleepy Hollow.

"Do you remember Ichabod and the headless rider, Sammy?" my mother asked.

"Very well," I answered.

"Right here," she said, pointing with her chin and caressing my shoulder with her smooth unwrinkled cheek.

With my hand I cupped her unprotected cheek against a rainy wind which intruded itself on Lanny's side of the car. Lanny quickly closed the window, and my mother smiled her thanks wincingly, as though to say, like children who are good, "I do hurt but only a little." Lanny rapped on the glass behind the chauffeur. The rapping seemed to mean something to him and it was quickly evident that the car was doing all it could.

I drew my fingers over Anne's cheek as she used to draw them over mine. "Oh, I kept twitching all right," she murmured. "If you find a wrinkle tell me."

Lanny had turned in her seat and was watching my mother intently. Suzanne, on a hint from Lanny, screwed one of the windows down three or four inches. My mother started to speak, but changed her mind and gasped a little for air.

"What airy air," she said. "So delightful to inhale," she added, and sank a little lower in her seat.

"Isn't she a brick, Sammy?" Mrs. Garrison said.

We dropped into a hollow which seemed vaguely familiar. It was raining hard and far below I could hear the sound of water rushing over rocks.

Lanny nudged her elbow into my side and said, "Those wise old trout. We never caught them."

"I'll bet they live to be a thousand," said Suzanne.

We came to a stop. The long low shadow pierced with a hundred lights was Lanny's house.

"Your nearly-was home," said Lanny.

We all got out of the car. I carried "Fingers" in my arms. Lanny whispered to George. He was alert and all action.

"No need for you," he said to the waiting chauffeur, "and perhaps I can make it a little faster." He sprang into the car and twisted it rapidly out of the grounds.

"Gone for a doctor," Lanny whispered in my ear. "We'll take your mother to the room that once was yours."

I was carrying Anne up the long broad stairway. Lanny and Suzanne followed close behind.

"Nothing to worry about, Sammy," Mrs. Garrison whispered.

"Certainly not," said Suzanne loud for my mother to hear.

"What a beautiful place to live in," my mother said, as I put her on a wide bed with her head on double-stacked pillows.

"That's your room, Sam-ee, straight across," Suzanne said. "Now you go out and we'll put your mother to bed."

Across the hall I went to my room, leaving the door open. Shortly I saw a doctor enter my mother's room, carrying something in his hand. He closed the door behind him.

Mr. George Garrison and I dined in the library, joined later by a black-haired woman dressed in white and crackling with starch.

"How is our little patient?" asked Georgie Garrison as he rose and placed a chair.

"She is sleeping quite comfortably," said the lady in starch.

"You think she'll get well?" I ventured to ask.

" 'Course she will," said Georgie, "and Miss Graves would say so too, only by rules nurses can't discuss cases."

Suzanne came down for coffee and picked a little here and there from dishes which were passed within her reach.

"She's going to make it all right, Sam-ee," she said. "On her bravery, but her little heart just wasn't made to—well, you know. Since you were born her heart has been working for two."

"She'll pull all right," said Georgie. "The little woman is joy-shocked that's all, and in the morning, with her dreams come true and with a month or two up here with us, she'll be better than new."

"Rain's over," said Suzanne, "and Uncle Georgie's

finished everything he has to say. Want to take a little walk around on the gravel, Sambo? Kind of pick things up where we left off?"

"Should I, is it all right?" I asked, addressing the nurse.

"Of course," was her reply. "Your mother is comfortable and sound asleep."

"Beat it," said Georgie Garrison.

Hand in hand, as once in Moorhead, we circled the white gravel roads around the house.

"Remember this, Sam-ee," Suzanne said. "I know every single thing that you have done. I heard it all from the governor of this state, and if you had not done all that you did do I'd hate you." She never looked so beautiful.

"The opposite of hate——" I said.

"Yes, Mr. Sam, I know that too and I love with all my heart every single thing you did."

I think that my answer was, "I am very glad, Suzanne, that you feel that way."

I know that Suzanne continued, "The governor told us everything there was to know. You are a citizen just as much as any one. Those bully Burrows sent Blackmar back his money and you promised to work off what was left. It's just too splendid."

"I didn't write to Blackmar until I found out what the Burrows had done," I said.

"'Course you didn't," said Suzanne. "No one does anything until something reminds him to do it. And even Blackmar said to the governor that he was proud of you, and rather well ashamed of himself, and if he thought your mother would marry him he'd ask her quick.

We walked once around the house without more words, when in tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Burrows and at the same time to show Suzanne that I had at least a name acquaintance with the arts I made this speech: "If Justice were a man, and in sculpture, the rugged Joseph Burrows with his straight back and his broad suspenders would do for Rodin; if a woman, and in a painting, Mrs. Burrows all white with a red band around her neck would have done for Mr. Edward Simmons who painted the ladies on the wall of the court-room in which I was sentenced to Sing Sing, and he did it very beautifully."

"Not to high-hat you at all, Samuel, I have never seen those ladies of which you speak. The Burrows, of course, are wonderful. Had they been otherwise my daddy would never have picked them out for you."

The doctor's motor was still in front of the door.

"Suzanne," I said, "that doctor would never stay unless there's reason for it. I don't care what they say, I am afraid. I'm awfully afraid. Is there anything that you know that I should know?"

"Of course not," Suzanne answered. "Of course Uncle Georgie has tons of money of his own and honestly could you expect a doctor to hurry, a doctor with ten children? It wouldn't be conscientious for him to hurry. We'll swing once more around the house and then we'll go in and in front of my room you can say good night to me."

"Say good night?" I repeated. Suzanne said nothing.

"Do you really," I asked, "can you really think the same of me as if I had not twice been locked up?"

"The first time didn't count," said Suzanne. "I can't give you any credit for that one. A wicked woman,

what's the word, oh, yes, she framed you, framed you up. And the second time—well, I've to admit—I mean for that I give you credit so I don't think the same of you as if you had never been locked up. I think more of you and if my father were alive he would say I was right. The Garrisons and I have been all over that and through it and under it and around it and when people like us say O. K. it's K. O. as far as other people go. Soon as your mother is able, you and she go ahead out West, and if in two years you have any impressions about me convey them to me personally. You knew, or did you know, that the Garrisons are going to build a memorial church in Moorhead in memory of my father."

"No, I didn't," I replied. "How wonderful!"

"You know us," said Suzanne. "We don't intend to see the laying of every stone, but every once in a while we'll be there. Chimes from England, glass from Austria, and wood pews from a forest in France."

There was a step on the gravel behind us. I turned. It was the nurse. She slipped her arm into mine.

"Come," she said. "Your mother is awake and wants to talk to you."

At the head of the stairs was Lanny Garrison. She brushed her eyes with her arm. From my mother's room came the doctor.

"You can stay but a minute," he said to me. "We'll leave the door open a bit and if she needs me I'll know and I'll come at once."

"Sit on the edge of the bed," said my mother, "and put your hand in mine."

"You are going to get well, mother," I said.

"Of course I am. Did any one say I wouldn't? I'm

much better now than I used to be. Just let me close my eyes a moment. I want to look at you when you were little." She closed her eyes.

"We'll go together out West. There's enough of my Sammy for all of us, for all of us, and he isn't a Juke and I'll make that awful judge know it. Kiss me good and say good night."

I leaned over to kiss her, but she propped herself gaily and fending her lips with one hand she said, "Not quite yet. Mother feels so strong. She may not always be that way and she wants to talk. When I am tired I'll tell you and then we'll say good night." She faced me, one cheek close to her pillow. Very deliberate she was, but she seemed to talk easily.

"If you get to be a writer," she said, "and I was always sure that you would, I wish that for a part of the year you and I, just you and I, could live again down at Gramercy Park. On the opposite side perhaps from where we used to be. Writers do live down there. Lots of them."

To rest her a bit (perhaps that was the reason) I asked, "What, mother, honestly, do you think I ought to write about? Of course whatever I write you'll have to fix up. So what do you say?"

"Oh, write about me," she laughed. "They have printed so many bad things that the nice things will at least be newsy."

For a time she lay very still and not to tire her I too was quiet and still.

"Golly, what a licking we gave to the Jukes or rather, to that Jeremiah judge. The only decent thing he said

was that I wouldn't be particularly noticed in a group of lady shoppers.

"See this scar?" She pushed her hair off her forehead and showed me a tiny feather-stitch scar.

"Take no stock in that surgery business, Sammy. It was you. We will put a nail in that discussion pronto, right now and at once." She covered the scar, rising slightly from her pillow to command a view of a suddenly detected mirror.

"The Jukes. Don't make mother laugh. . . . Such a round smooth little chap. Put one foot on the edge of the tub, dearest, and one arm around mother's neck. That's it. Hang tight. There'll be no cold wet end of a rag flopping around Sammy's legs when mommy's on the job. Oh, Sammy, how mommy loves you."

The door was opened quickly, as by one who had been intently listening before entering. Lanny came in.

"I am afraid you have been here quite long enough for this time, don't you?" she asked. "Oh, I am sure you have," she exclaimed, as she took a quick look at my mother.

Lanny wheeled for the doctor, but he was already hurrying to my mother's side. His head went quickly to her heart and then from his pocket came a long black tube, one end of which he placed in his ear. He shook his head.

A belated night bird made a good-by sound. The muslin curtains at the window flickered idly outward. Anne Leaubeau Torello was in my arms, but her soul was far beyond. Whatever the lay of the land was I am sure she found it beautiful.

CHAPTER LIII

PAYING UP

THE day after the funeral I left for Moorhead. Mr. and Mrs. Burrows met me at the station, and many old friends were on the platform. They shook my hand or slapped me on the back according to their various notions and their respective positions in the crowd. The snow crackled and it was pleasant again to hear the crunching sounds of corrugated soles on frosty snow. The smoke from the chimneys rose straight and thin.

We stopped our bob-sled for a moment in front of Polly Redfern Barnard's. The house was hot-water heated and warm and cluttered with two sets of children and two sets of furniture. We all drank hot coffee, and we were soon off for the farm near Glyndon.

Suzanne had telegraphed the death of my mother and had telegraphed again on the day of the funeral.

"We should have sent flowers," Mrs. Burrows said, "but we couldn't do much as compared with those rich people, and we were afraid you'd think that our little offering would be the measure of our affection and sorrow."

"We just didn't know, Sammy," said Mr. Burrows, "and like most people who don't know we just did nothing, but next to you I don't believe any one was sorrier. She

has had a room in our house whenever she was ready to take it. On the day of her funeral we put our little floral offerings on her bed and we then kind of had a little service of our own. I put on some roses."

"And I put on lilies and both of us strewed ferns in and out among them," said Mrs. Burrows, "and for you, remembering what you used to tell us, we put a little cross of white flowers over some red ones in the shape of a heart, then we both sang a hymn. And after two days," Mrs. Burrows added, "we took all the flowers and put them out——" Tears brimmed to her eyes.

"I know," I said, holding her hand.

Mr. Burrows cleared his throat so vehemently that he twisted the sound into a command to the horses. They responded, and we slipped rapidly across the hard-packed prairie snow. Of a sudden the little white farm-house detached itself from the leaden sky-line and advanced rapidly to meet us.

Three fall crops have been dug and reaped and sold. Our farm is clear of debt and so am I. The Garrisons and Suzanne are coming out for the dedication of the new St. Paul's church. They arrive from the East next Saturday and, I write it with a lump of joy, Suzanne is not returning.

THE END

***I have said that standing on the station platform in Auburn I could see my mother waving her hand from her cell in prison. I have since been told that, on account of the location of the part of the prison occupied by women, it was impossible for me to have seen my mother's cell window from the railroad side of the prison.

I shall make no correction. I thought I saw her waving then and I know I can see her waving now.